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THE LUCK OF THIRTEEN

Jo at the Machine Gun.

THE
LUCK OF THIRTEEN

WANDERINGS AND FLIGHT THROUGH MONTENEGRO AND SERBIA

BY
MR. AND MRS. JAN GORDON

WITH PHOTOGRAPHS AND A MAP
TAIL PIECES BY CORA J. GORDON
COLOUR PLATES BY JAN GORDON

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THE LUCK OF THIRTEEN

INTRODUCTION

It is curious to follow anything right back to its inception, and to discover from what extraordinary causes results are due. It is strange, for instance, to find that the luck of the thirteen began right back at the time when Jan, motoring back from Uzhitze down the valley of the Morava, coming fastish round a corner, plumped right up to the axle in a slough of clinging wet sandy mud. The car almost shrugged its shoulders as it settled down, and would have said, if cars could speak, "Well, what are you going to do about that, eh?" It was about the 264th mud hole in which Jan's motor had stuck, and we sat down to wait for the inevitable bullocks. But it was a Sunday and bullocks were few; the wait became tedious, and in the intervals of thought which alternated with the intervals of exasperation, Jan realized that he needed a holiday.

To be explicit. Jan was acting as engineer to Dr. Berry's Serbian Mission from the Royal Free

Hospital:—Jan Gordon, and Jo is his wife, Cora Josephine Gordon, artist, and V.A.D.

We had a six months of work behind us. We had seen the typhus, and had dodged the dreaded louse who carries the infection, we had seen the typhus dwindle and die with the onrush of summer. We had helped to clean and prepare six hospitals at Vrntze or Vrnjatchka Banja—whichever you prefer. We had helped Mr. Berry, the great surgeon, to ventilate his hospitals by smashing the windows—one had been a child again for a moment. Jo had learned Serbian and was assisting Dr. Helen Boyle, the Brighton mind specialist, to run a large and flourishing out-patient department to which tuberculosis and diphtheria—two scourges of Serbia—came in their shoals. We had endeavoured to ward off typhoid by initiating a sort of sanitary vigilance committee, having first sacked the chief of police: we had laid drains, which the chief Serbian engineer said he would pull up as soon as we had gone away. We had helped in the plans of a very necessary slaughter-house, which Mr. Berry was going to present to the town. There was an excuse for Jan's desire. The English papers had been howling about the typhus months after the disease had been chased out by English, French, and American doctors, who had disinfected the country till it reeked of formalin

and sulphur; shoals of devoted Englishwomen were still pouring over, generously ready to risk their lives in a danger which no longer existed. Our own unit, which had dwindled to a comfortable—almost a family—number, with Mr. Berry as father, had been suddenly enlarged by an addition of ten. These ten complicated things, they all naturally wanted work, and we had cornered all the jobs.

So, after the fatigues of February, March, and April, and the heat of June, Jan quite decided on that Uzhitze mud patch that a holiday would do little harm to himself, and good to everybody else. Then, however, came the problem of Jo. Jo is a socialistic sort of a person with conservative instincts. She has the feminine ability to get her wheels on a rail and run comfortably along till Jan appears like a big railway accident and throws the scenery about; but once the resolution accomplished she pursues the idea with a determination and ferocity which leaves Jan far in the background.

Jo had her out-patient department. Every morning, wet or fine, crowds of picturesque peasants would gather about the little side door of our hospital, women in blazing coloured hand-woven skirts, like Joseph's coat, children in unimaginable rags, but with the inevitable belt tightly bound about their little stomachs, men covered with tuberculous sores and so forth, on some days

as many as a hundred. Jo, having finished breakfast, had then to assume a commanding air, and to stamp down the steps into the crowd, sort out the probable diphtheria cases—this by long practice,—forbid anybody to approach them under pain of instant disease, get the others into a vague theatre queue, which they never kept, and then run back into the office to assist the doctor and to translate. All this, repeated daily, was highly interesting of course, and so when Jan suggested the tour she "didn't want to do it."

But authority was on Jan's side. Jo had had a mild accident: a diphtheria patient fled to avoid being doctored, they often did, and Jo had chased after her; she tripped, fell, drove her teeth through her lower lip, and for a moment was stunned. When they caught the patient they found that it was the wrong person—but that is beside the subject. Dr. Boyle thought that Jo had had a mild concussion and threw her weight at Jan's side. Dr. Berry was quite agreeable, and gave us a commission to go to Salonika to start with and find a disinfector which had gone astray. Another interpreter was found, so Jo took leave of her out-patients.

* * * * *

In Serbia it was necessary to get permission to move. Jan went to the major for the papers. There were crowds of people on the major's steps,

OUT-PATIENTS.

SHOEING BULLOCKS.

and Jan learned that all the peasants and loafers had been called in to certify, so that nobody should avoid their military service. Later we parted, taking two knapsacks. Dr. Boyle and Miss Dickenson were very generous, giving us large supplies of chocolate, Brand's essence, and corned beef for our travels, and we had two boxes of "compressed luncheons," black horrible-looking gluey tabloids which claim to be soup, fish, meat, vegetables and pudding in one swallow.

The Austrian prisoners bade us a sad farewell, but many friends accompanied us to the station, and the rotund major and his rounder wife did us the like honour. Our major was a queer mixture: he was jolly because he was fat, and he was stern because he had a beaky nose, and in any interview one had first to ascertain whether the stomach or the nose held the upper hand, so to speak. With the wife one was always sure—she had a snub nose. On this occasion the major furiously boxed the Austrian prisoner coachman's ears, telling us that he was the best he had ever had. The unfortunate driver was a picture of rueful pleasure. The two plump dears stood waving four plump hands till we had rumbled round the corner of the landscape.

In the train to Nish it was intensely hot. We had sixteen or seventeen fellow-passengers in our

third-class wooden-seated carriage—all the firsts had been removed, because they could not be disinfected—and the windows, with the exception of two, had been screwed tightly down. Every time we stood up to look at the landscape somebody slipped into our seat, and we were continually sitting down into unexpected laps. Expostulations, apologies, and so on. Somebody had gnawed a piece from one of the wheels, and we lurched through the scenery with a banging metallic clangour which made conversation difficult, in spite of which Jo astonished the natives by her colloquial and fluent Serbian. We had an enormous director of a sanitary department and a plump wife, evidently risen, but fat people rise in Serbia automatically like balloons. We had three meagre old gentlemen, one unshaven for a week, one whiskered since twenty years with Piccadilly weepers like a stage butler; some ultra fashionable girls and men; and a dear old dumb woman wearing three belts, who had been a former outpatient; and several sticky families of children.

The old gentlemen took a huge interest in Jo. They drew her out in Serbian, and at every sentence turned each to the other and elevated their hands, ejaculating "kako!" (how!) in varying terms of admiration and flattery.

The American has not yet ousted the Turk

from Serbia, and the bite from our wheel banged off the revolutions of our sedate passing. Trsternik's church—modern but good taste—gleamed like a jewel in the sun against the dark hills. On either hand were maize fields with stalks as tall as a man, their feathery tops veiling the intense green of the herbage with a film, russet like cobwebs spun in the setting sun. There were plum orchards —for the manufacture of plum brandy—so thick with fruit that there was more purple than green in the branches, and between the trunks showed square white ruddy-roofed hovels with great squat tile-decked chimneys. Some of the houses were painted with decorations of bright colours, vases of flowers or soldiers, and on one was a detachment of crudely drawn horsemen, dark on the white walls, meant to represent the heroes of old Serbian poetry.

To Krusevatz the valley broadened, and the sinking sun tinted the widening maize-tops till the fields were great squares of gold. We had no lights in the train, and presently dusk closed down, seeming to shut each up within his or her own mind. The hills grew very dark and distant, and on the faint rising mist the trees seemed to stand about with their hands in their pockets like vegetable Charlie Chaplins.

A junction, and a rush for tables at the little out-of-door restaurant. In the country from which

we have just come all seemed peace, but here in truth was war. Passing shadowy in the faint lights were soldiers; soldiers crouched in heaps in the dark corners of the station; yet more soldiers and soldiers again huddled in great square box trucks or open waggons waiting patiently for the train which was four or five hours late. There were women with them, wives or sisters or daughters, with great heavy knapsacks and stolid unexpressive faces.

While we were dreaming of this romance of war, and of the coming romance of our own tour, a little man dumped himself at our table, explained that he had a pain in his kidneys, and started an interminable story about his wife and a dog. He was Jan's devoted admirer, and declared that Jan had performed a successful operation upon him, though Jan is no surgeon, and had never set eyes upon the man before.

Georgevitch rescued us. Georgevitch was fat, tall, young and genial, and was military storekeeper at Vrntze. He was an ideal storekeeper and looked the part, but he had been a comitaj. He had roamed the country with belts full of bombs and holsters full of pistols, he and 189 others, with two loaves of bread per man and then "Ever Forwards." Of the 189 others only 22 were left, and one was a patient at our hospital where

we called him the " Velika Dete " or " big child," because of his sensibility. With Georgevitch was a dark woman with keen sparkling eyes. Alone, this woman had run the typhus barracks in Vrntze until the arrival of the English missions. She was a Montenegrin; no Serbian woman could be found courageous enough to undertake the task. After struggling all the winter, she was taken ill about a fortnight after the arrival of the English. The Red Cross Mission took care of her and she recovered.

We left our bore still talking about his wife and the dog, and fled to their table, where we chatted till our train arrived. We found a coupé—a carriage with only one long seat—the exigencies of which compelled Jan to lie all night with Jo's boots on his face, and we so slept as well as we were able.

CHAPTER II

NISH AND SALONIKA

To our dismay a rare thing happened—our train was punctual, and we arrived in Nish at four o'clock. It was cold and misty. The station was desolate and the town asleep. Around us in the courtyard ragged soldiers were lying with their heads pillowed on brightly striped bags. A nice old woman who had asked Jo how old she was, what relation Jan was to her, whether they had children, and where she had learnt Serbian, suddenly lost all her interest in us and hurried off with voluble friends whose enormous plaits around their flat red caps betokened the respectable middle-class women.

Piccadilly weepers vanished and a depressed little quartet was left on the platform—our two selves, a lean schoolmaster, and an egg-shaped man who never spoke a word. We found a clerk sitting in an office. He said we could not leave our bags in his room, but as we made him own that we could not put them anywhere else he looked the other way while we dropped them in the corner.

In the faint mist of the early morning the great

overgrown village of one-storied houses seemed like a real town buried up to its attics in fog. We found a café which was shut, and sat waiting on green chairs outside. Around us old men were talking of the news in the papers. They said that Bulgaria was making territorial demands, and as the Balkan governments covet land above all things they felt pessimistic as to whether Serbia would concede anything, and said, shaking their heads, "It will be another Belgium."

We celebrated the opening of the café by ordering five Turkish coffees each, and the schoolmaster and we alternately stood treat. Jo loaded up with aspirin to deaden a toothache which was worrying her.

We spent a cynical morning in interviews with people who were supposed to know about missing luggage. Both they and we were aware that the first hospital which got a wandering packing-case froze on to it, and if inconvenient people came to hunt for their property the dismayed and guilty ones hurriedly painted the case, saying to each other, "After all it's in a good cause, and it's better than if it were stolen."

Then we went to see the powers who can say "no" to those who want to do pleasant things, and were handed an amendment to a plea for a tour round Serbia, including the front, which we had

sent to them and which had been pigeon-holed for a month.

"But we don't want to see a lot of monasteries," said Jan, as he gazed at a little circle drawn round the over-visited part of Serbia. The powers were adamant and seemed to think they had done very well for us. We went away sadly, for monasteries had not been the idea at all.

Half an hour later we were pursuing an entirely different object. We had discovered that Sir Ralph Paget was housing about £1000 worth of stores destined for Dr. Clemow's hospital—which was in Montenegro—and which needed an escort. He was somewhat puzzled at our altruistic anxiety to take them off his hands, but was much relieved at the thought that he could get rid of them.

We hurried to the station, rescued our knapsacks under the nose of a new official who looked very much surprised, and boarded the English rest house near by. English people were sitting in deck chairs outside the papier-maché house which stood surrounded by a couple of tents and a wooden kitchen in a field. Austrian prisoners were preparing lunch, and we were introduced to Seemitch the dog.

Though young, Seemitch was fat and exhibited signs of a much-varied ancestry. The original Seemitch, an important Serb with long gold teeth,

was very indignant that a dog, and such a dog, should be called after him, so Sir Ralph arranged that of the two other puppies one should be called after him and the other after Mr. Hardinge his secretary. Thus the man Seemitch's dignity was restored.

At the station, to our great joy, we met two American doctors from Zaichar. One we had mourned for dead and were astonished to see him, shadow-like, stiff-kneed, and sitting uncomfortably on a chair in the middle of the platform. Months before he had pricked himself with a needle while operating on a gangrenous case, and had since lain unconscious with blood-poisoning.

While we were cheering over his recovery, a little Frenchman slipped into our reserved compartment, which was only a coupé, and had seized the window seat. Jan found him lubricating his mouth, already full of dinner, with wine from a bottle. As he showed no signs of seeing reason from the male, Jo tried feminine indignation. "That seat is mine," she snapped to his back-tilted head.

"Good. I exact nothing," he said, wiping his moustache upwards. She suggested that if any exacting was to be done she possessed the exclusive rights.

"Quel pays," he answered. Jo thought he was casting aspersions on England and on her as the nearest representative, and the air became

distinctly peppery. The Frenchman hurriedly explained that he was alluding to Serbia, so they buried the hatchet and became acquaintances.

* * * * *

Uskub, or Skoplje, and one hour to wait. All about the great plains the mountains were just growing ruddy with the dawn, and we gulped boiling coffee at the station restaurant.

One of the American doctors seemed restless. Some one had told him it was advisable to keep an eye on the luggage. They began to shunt the train, and soon he was stumbling about the sidings in a resolute attempt not to lose sight of the luggage van. We sympathetically wished him good luck and walked past into the Turkish quarter, adopted by two dogs which followed us all the way. We had a hurried glimpse of queer-shaped, many-coloured houses, trousered women, and a general Turkishness.

We returned to find our American friend furious, full of the superior methods of luggage registration in the States.

We had beer with him at the frontier, delicious cool stuff with a mollifying influence. He told us he held the record for one month's hernia operations in Serbia. We were later to meet his rival, a Canadian doctor, in Montenegro.

Locked in the train, we awaited the medical

examination, and sat feeling self-consciously healthy. At last the Greek doctor opened the door, glanced at a knapsack, and vanished. We were certified healthy.

It was a beautiful dark blue night when we arrived at Salonika. Crowds of people were dining at little tables which filled the streets off the quay, in spite of the awful smells which came up from the harbour.

It is impossible to sleep late in Salonika. Soon after dawn children possess the town—bootblacks, paper-sellers, perambulating drapers' shops; all children crying their wares noisily. The only commodity that the children don't peddle is undertaken by mules laden with glass fronted cases hanging on each side and which are filled with meat.

We breakfasted in the street, revelling in the early morning and shooing away the children, who never gave us a moment's grace. In self-defence we had our boots blacked, for the ambulating bootblack molests no longer the owner of a well-polished pair of boots. It is queer to walk about in a town where one-third of the population is only pecuniarily interested in the momentary appearance of feet and never look at a face, like the man with the muckrake with eyes glued on life as it is led two inches from the ground.

When we had finished searching for disinfectors

and dentists we wandered up the hill through the romantic streets. Jan sketched busily, but toothache had rather sapped Jo's industry, and she generally found some large stone to sit on, whence to contemplate.

An old woman's face, peering round the doorway, discovered her sitting on the doorstep, a Greek dustman gazing stupidly at her.

In two minutes they were talking hard. The old woman was a Bulgarian, but they were able to understand each other. What Jo told the old woman was translated to the dustman, and when Jan came up they were introduced each to the other, the dustman with his broom bowing to the ground like some old-time court usher.

Once a Greek woman offered a chair to Jo. She was much embarrassed, as the only Greek words she had picked up were "How much?" and "Yet another;" and as both seemed unsuitable she tried to put her gratitude into the width of her smile.

We scrambled on ever afterwards through streets which were more like cliff climbs than roads. The sun grew red till all Salonika lay at our feet a maze of magenta shadow. We sat down in an old Turkish cemetery, where we could watch the old wall sliding down to plains of gold, where, falling into ruins, it lent its degraded stones for the construction of Turkish hovels.

A kitten with paralysed hind legs crawled up to us and accepted a little rubbing. When dusk came we moved on, marvelling at the inexhaustible picturesqueness of Salonika.

As we clambered down the breakneck paths, the priests were illuminating the minarets with hundreds of twinkling lights.

The next day was the Feast. Mahommedans were everywhere. By the women's trousers, which twinkled beneath the shrouding veils, one could see that they were gorgeously dressed. Befezzed men were lounging and smoking in all the cafés.

In the evening once more we wandered up through the old Turkish quarter. We heard a curious noise like a hymn played by bagpipes, rhythmically accompanied in syncopation by a very flabby drum. Round the corner came four jolly niggers blowing pipes, and the drummer behind them. Very slim young men with bright sashes and light trousers were twisting, posturing, and dancing joyfully. One of them threw to Jo the most graceful kiss she had ever seen.

We left Salonika in the morning, having been wakened by new sounds. Thousands of marching feet, songs. This was puzzling.

In the train a young Greek told us that his nation had mobilized against the Bulgars, but that it was not very serious. He said that there had

been very friendly feeling in Greece for England, but that we had done our best to kill it.

"You see, monsieur," he explained, "your offer to give away our land. It is not yours to give. You say that does not matter, but that colonies, great colonies in Africa will replace the small part of land that we may surrender. Kavalla is more valuable to Grecian hearts than all Africa, for how could we desert our Grecian brothers and place them beneath the rule of the Turk or Bulgar?"

On the train were more American doctors. One had just arrived, and was still full of enthusiasm for scenery and sanitation. Also there was Princess —— surrounded by packing cases. Some months earlier she had visited our hospitals in Vrntze and she had asked if one of our V.A.D.'s could be sent to her as housemaid. Seeing her in the station, Jo involuntarily ran over in her mind, was she "sober, honest and obliging?"

The American doctors and we picnicked together. We ate bully beef and a huge water melon. The heat was awful. The velvet seats seemed to invade one's body and come through at the other side. One of the doctors sat on the step of the train, and Jo found him nodding and smiling as he dreamt. She rescued him before he fell off.

After twelve hours they left us. Uskub once more and an hour to wait. We sat behind trees

in boxes on the platform and ate omelet with a nice old Jew and his ten-year-old daughter, who already spoke five languages.

Then to sleep. We found our half coupé contained a second seat which could be pulled down, so we each had a bed. At four in the morning we were awakened by the most awful imitation of a German band.

What had happened? We looked out. It was barely dawn, and a wretched little orchestra was grouped at the edge of the tiny station. Every instrument was cracked and was tuned one-sixteenth tone different from its companions. What it lacked in musical ability it made up in energy.

Why, oh, *why* at that hour, we never found out. Perhaps it was in honour of the Princess, poor lady!

CHAPTER III

OFF TO MONTENEGRO

Back to Nish in the rain, and Jo was wearing a cotton frock. There may be more dismal towns than this Nish, but I have yet to see them, and this, although the great squares were packed with gaily coloured peasants—some feast, we imagined—carts full of melons, melons on the ground, melons framing the faces of the greedy—cerise green-rind moons projecting from either cheek. The Montenegrin consul was not at home, so off we went to the Foreign Office to give a letter to Mr. Grouitch, who sent us to the Sanitary Department of the War Office (henceforth known as S. D. W. O.). S. D. W. O. wouldn't move without a letter from "Sir Paget." We got the letter from "Sir Paget" and back to the S. D. W. O., to find it shut in our faces, and to learn that it did not reopen till four.

Then came the matter of Jo's tooth. This abscess had been nagging all the time, it had vigorously tried to get between Jo and the scenery. We had sought dentists in Salonika, rejecting one because his hall was too dirty, a second because she (yes, a she) was practising on her father's certificates, the third, a little Spaniard, had red-hot

PEASANT WOMEN IN GALA COSTUME—NISH.

pokered the gums thereof and only annoyed it. But we had heard there was a Russian dentist in Nish, a very good one. The Russian dentist turned out to be a girl, and tiny—she spoke no Serb, but Jo managed, by means of the second cousinship of the language, to make out what she said in Russian.

"The tooth must come out," squeaked the small dentist.

"Can't you save it?" prayed Jo; "it's the best one I've got, and the one to which I send all the Serbian meat."

"It must come out," squeaked the Russ.

"Can't you save it?" prayed Jo.

"It must come out," reiterated the Russ.

"You're very small," said Jo, doubtfully.

This annoyed the dentist. She pushed unwilling Jo into a chair, produced a pair of pincers, and, oh, woe! she wrenched to the north, she wrenched to the south, she wrenched to the east, and there was the tooth, nearly as big as the dentist herself.

"I never can eat Serbian meat again," murmured Jo as she mopped her mouth.

After tea we returned to the S. D. W. O., and by means of our letter and our Englishness we got in front of all the unfortunate people who had been waiting for hours, and received our passes, etc., immediately.

Sir Ralph Paget's storekeeper wouldn't work

on Sunday, so we had also to rest, and we celebrated by staying in bed late and going for a walk in the afternoon with an Englishman who was *en route* for Sofia. We came to a little village where every house was surrounded by high walls made of wattle. The women soon crowded round, imagining Mr. B—— a doctor. Jo pretended to translate, and gave advice for a girl with consumption, and an old woman whose hand was stiff from typhus, and we had to give the money for the latter's unguent. For the consumptive she said, "Open the windows, rest, and don't spit"; but that isn't a peasant's idea of doctoring: they want medicine or magic, one or the other, which doesn't matter.

The train started "after eight" on Monday evening. The English boys at the Rest house were very good to us, adding to our small stock of necessities a "Tommy's treasure," two mackintosh capes, and some oxo cubes. One youth said, "You won't want to travel a second time on a Serbian luggage train"; then ruefully, "I've done it! The shunting, phew!"

A Serbian railway station is a public meeting-place; along the platform, but railed off from the train, is a restaurant which is one of the favourite cafés of the town. It is such fun to the still childish Serbian mind to sit sipping beer or wine and watch the trains run about, and hear the whistles. We had

our supper amongst the gay crowd, and then pushed out into the darkened goods station to find our travelling bedroom, for we were to sleep in the waggons —beds and matresses having been provided—and we had borrowed blankets from the Rest house.

We found our truck and climbed in. There were certainly beds enough, for there were thirty light iron folding bedsteads piled up at one end. We chose two, and, not satisfied with the stacking of the others, Jan repiled them, with an eye on what our friend had said about Serbian shunting. Even then Jo was not happy about them.

We sat on our beds, reading or staring out of our open door at the twinkle of the station lights, the moving flares of the engines, and the fountains of sparks which rushed from their chimneys; listening to the chains of bumps which denoted a shunting train. We heard another chain of bumps, which rattled rapidly towards us and suddenly—a most awful CRASH. The candle went out, and we were flung from bed on to the floor. Our truck hurtled down the line at about thirty miles an hour, and suddenly struck some solid object. Another wild crash, and the whole twenty-eight beds flung themselves upon the place where we had been, and smashed our couches to the ground.

We have read stories of the Spanish Inquisition about rooms which grow smaller, and at last crush

the unfortunate victim to a jelly: we can now appreciate the feeling of the unfortunate victim aforesaid. There were piles of packing-cases at either end of the van, and for the next hour, as we were hurtled up and down by the Serbian engine-driver, at each crash these packing-cases crept nearer and nearer. The beds had fallen across the door, so it was impossible to escape. When the lower cases had reached the beds they halted, but the upper ones still crept on towards us. In the short, wild intervals of peace Jan tried to push the cases back and restore momentary stability. In addition to diminishing room, we were flung about with every crash, landing on the corner of a packing-case, on the edge of an iron bedstead, and with each crash the light went out. We will give not one jot of advantage to your prisoner in the Spanish Inquisition, save that we escaped whereas he did not.

The engine-driver tired of the sport just in time to save our limbs, if not lives, and he dragged the train out of the station into the dark.

At Krusevatch we halted for the next day. After a discussion with the station-master, who asked us to come down first at six p.m., then at four, then at one, and lastly in two hours, at nine a.m. we strolled up towards the town. There was an old beggar on the road, and he was cuddling

a "goosla," or Serbian one-stringed fiddle, which sounds not unlike a hive of bees in summer-time, and is played not with the tips of the fingers, as a violin, but with the fat part of the first phalanx. As soon as he heard our footsteps he began to howl, and to saw at his miserable instrument; and as soon as he had received our contribution he stopped suddenly. We were worth no more effort; but we admired his frankness.

Krusevatz market-place is like the setting of a Serbian opera. The houses are the kind of houses that occupy the back scenery of opera, and in the middle is an abominable statue commemorating something, which is just in the bad taste which would mar an opera setting. There was an old man wandering about with two knapsacks, one on his back and one on his chest, and from the orifice of each peered out innumerable ducks' heads. We returned to the station at nine, but were told that nothing could be done till one. So we went up to the churchyard, spread our mackintoshes, and got a much-needed sleep. The church is very old, but isn't much to look at, and we, being no archæologists, would sooner look at that of Trsternick, though it is modern.

We returned to the station to unload our trucks, for at this point the broad-gauge line ceases, and there is but a narrow-gauge into the mountains.

A band of Austrian prisoners were detailed to help us, and they at once recognized us, and knew that we came from Vrntze. They were in a wretched condition: their clothes were torn, they said that they had no change of underclothes, and were swarming with vermin, nor could they be cleaned, for they worked even on Sundays, and had no time to wash their clothes. They begged us for soap, and asked us to send them a change of raiment from Vrntze. We explained sadly that we were not going back just yet, but we could oblige them with the soap, for a case had been broken open, and the waggon was strewn with bars. We also gave some to the engine-driver, as a bribe to shunt us gently.

We imagined that the soap had burst because of the shunting, but in our second truck discovered that this same shunting had been strangely selective. It had, for instance, opened a case of brandy, it had burst a box of tinned tongue, and even opened some of the tins which were strewn in the truck. And yet the truck had been sealed, both doors. Several cases of biscuits, too, had been abstracted, and all this must have happened under the very noses of the Englishmen who had supervised the loading. Some of the prisoners said that they were starving, so we distributed our spare crusts amongst them, and they ate them greedily enough.

In the fields by the railway were queer pallid

green plants which puzzled us. They were like tall cabbages, and shone with a curious ghostly intensity in the gloaming.

We dangled our feet over the side of our waggon watching the flitting scenery. At one point we passed a train in which were other English people, who stared amazed at us and waved their hands as we disappeared. Dusk was down when we passed Vrntze, and we reached the gorges of Ovchar in the dark. We thundered through tunnels and out over hanging precipices, the river beneath us a faint band of greyish light in the blackness of the mountains.

Uzhitze in the morning at 4.30; it was cold and wet. Jan wanted to hurry off to the hotel, but Jo sensibly refused, and we settled down till a decent hour.

The hotel was a huge room with a smaller yard; on the one side of the yard were the kitchens, etc., and on the other a string of bedrooms. We then crossed the big square to the Nachanlik's (or mayor's) office.

Outside the mayor's office we found an old friend. He had been a patient in our hospital, and gangrene, following typhus, had so poisoned his legs that both were amputated. He had been discharged the day before, and had travelled up from Vrntze, some eight hours, in an open truck.

The Serbian authorities had brought him from the station and had propped him on a wooden bench outside the mayor's office, where he had remained all night, and where we found him. He was a charming fellow, though very silent. Once when Jo had remarked upon this silence he had answered, "When a man has no longer any legs it is fitting that he should be silent."

He was waiting for his father, who lived twelve hours away in the mountains. The old man came with a donkey, and there was a most affecting meeting between the old father and his poor mutilated son. Tears flowed freely on either side, for Serbs are still simple enough to be unashamed of emotion. The donkey had an ordinary saddle, on to which our friend was hoisted. He balanced tentatively for a moment, then shook his head. A pack-saddle was substituted.

"It is hard," he said, "young enough, and yet like a useless bale of goods."

Twenty hours he had endured, and yet had twelve to go—thirty-two hours for a man without legs. This will show of what some Serbs are made.

Within the office we found a professor whom we had met before, and who was acting as assistant mayor. We took him to the station and estimated that thirty-two waggons would deal with our stuff.

Jo and Jan went for a stroll. Uzhitze, especially

SERB CONVALESCENTS AT UZHITZE.

in the back streets, is like a Dürer etching—that one of the Prodigal Son, for instance, all tiny, peaky-roofed houses. We took a siesta in the afternoon, but Jan was dragged out to talk to our professor, who explained that it was impossible for the Serbian Government to find thirty-two ox-carts at once, so the convoy must make two journeys. He also said that horses would be provided for us, and that we would take two or three days to do the trip, but that the ox-waggons would be at least seven, which was death to our romantic dream of toiling laboriously up almost inaccessible mountains at the head of straining ox-carts, sleeping by the roadside, brigands, and all that.

We went down to the station, unloaded the truck and checked the numbers. A few were missing, but not so many as we had expected.

A regiment of soldiers were called up; at a word of command they pounced upon our packing-cases and hurried them off to a storehouse. The smaller cases were left to go on donkeys, two on either side.

The professor dined with us. He is an Anglophile, and was determined after the war to go to England in order to discover the secret of her greatness. He had a theory that it lay in our educational laws, which he wanted to transplant into Serbia wholesale. Jan thought not, and

suggested that it might lie even deeper than that.

Next day was a Prazhnik, or feast day, and the great square was crowded with peasantry in their beautiful hand-woven clothes. There were soldiers straight back from the lines chaffing and flirting with the pretty girls, and presently a group began to dance the "Kola" about a man who played a pipe. It is not difficult to dance the Kola. You join hands till a ring is formed, and then shuffle round and round. If you have aspirations to style you fling your legs about as much as space will allow, and we noticed how much better the men danced than the girls, who were almost all very clumsy.

We were to be called at six, so went to bed early, and in spite of the odours from the yard slept soundly.

CHAPTER IV

ACROSS THE FRONTIER

We got up in good time, breakfasted, but there was no sign of horses. After waiting two hours a square man was brought up to us by the waiter and introduced as our guide. The professor, who had promised to see us off, was apparently clinging to his bed, for he did not come. Our guide was a taciturn, loose-limbed fellow, but had nice eyes and a charming manner; he helped us on to our horses, and off we went. Jan was rather anxious at the start, for he had done very little riding since childhood; but his horse was quiet, and soon he had persuaded himself that he was a cavalier from birth. Jo was riding astride for the second time in her life.

We took the road to Zlatibor (golden hill). There was a heavy mist, the hills were just outlined in faint washes on the fog, and as we mounted the zig-zag path, higher and higher, the town became small and fairylike beneath us; and a soldiers' camp made a queer chessboard on the green of the

valley. Jo's horse cast a shoe almost at the start, but the guide said that it did not matter. We went on and ever up, our horses clambering like goats. The scenery was on the whole very English, and not unlike the Devonshire side of Dartmoor.

Our guide took us a two mile detour to show us his house. Later we reached a tiny village with a queer church. We off-saddled for a moment, and were welcomed by the inhabitants, who gave us Turkish coffee and plum brandy (rakia), while in exchange we made them cigarettes of English tobacco. At sixteen kilometres we reached a larger village, where we decided to lunch. We were astonished by the sudden appearance of a French doctor. He was delighted to see us, more so when he found that we both spoke French, and invited us to coffee. We lunched with our guide at the local inn. We ordered pig; indeed there was nothing else to order.

"How much?" said mine host.

"For three," answered we.

"But how much is that?" replied mine host. "You see, each man eats differently." So we ordered one kilo to go on with.

Half a pig was wrenched from a spit in front of the big fire, carried sizzling outside to the wood block, where the waiter hewed it apart with the axe.

We had discovered peculiarities in our horses. They had conscientious objections to going abreast, and always walked single file; this was owing to the narrowness of the mountain paths. Jo's horse, which somehow looked like Monkey Brand, insisted on taking the second place, and would by no means go third. At last we reached the top of Zlatibor—which gets its name from a peculiar golden cheese which it produces. The view is like that from the Cat and Fiddle in Derbyshire, only bigger in scale, and from thence the ride began to be interminable. It grew darker, we walked down the hills to ease our aching knees, and Jan decided that horse riding was no go.

Finally the guide decided that it was too late to reach Novi Varosh that night, and so the direction was altered. The road grew stony and more stony. A bitter breeze came up with the evening. We came to a green valley, at the end of which was a rocky gorge, down which ran the twistiest stream: it seemed as though it had been designed by a lump of mercury on a wobbling plate. We turned from the gorge on to a hill so rocky that the path was only visible where former horse-hoofs had stained the stones with red earth.

The village consisted of an enormous school, a little church, soldiers encamped round fires in the churchyard, and seven or eight wooden hovels.

Our guide stopped at the door of the dirtiest and rapped. A furtive woman's face peered out into the gloom. We climbed painfully from our saddles, for we had been thirteen hours on the road.

"Beds?" said the guide to the woman.

"Good Lord!" thought we.

She shook her head dolefully and said, "Ima," which means "there is." Serbians nod for no. The woman slid out into the night and passed to another building, climbed the stairs to a veranda and disappeared.

It grew colder, the guide was busy unharnessing the horses, so shivering we sought refuge in the dirty house, which was not quite so bad within as we had feared. It was furnished with a long table and two benches only, and was lighted by a small fire which was burning on a huge open hearth, and which gave no heat at all. The woman came back and led us to the other house for supper, which was boiled eggs, and the guide generously shared his own bread with us, as we had none. There was no water to drink, and Jo tried, not very successfully, to quench her thirst with rakia.

There were but two beds, and on inquiry finding that there was no place for the guide, we allotted one bed to him. On our own bed the sheets had evidently not been changed since it was first made, and the pillow which once had been white was

a dark ironclad grey. We undid our mackintoshes and spread them over both counterpane and pillow. We lay down clothed as we were, and by the time we had finished our preparations the guide was already snoring.

As soon as the light was turned out the whole room began to tick like ten agitated clocks, and all about us in the darkness began strange noises of life: rats scampered in all directions and were finally hurdling over our heads. We had taken some aspirin to ward off the stiffness of unaccustomed exercise, but we were sore, and the narrowness of the bed forced us to lie on our backs; exhaustion, however, conquered all discomforts, and we slept. Jo awoke in the night and yelped to find that the mackintosh had slipped and that her head was resting on the pillow.

We were up again at 5.30, and Vladimir, the guide, suggested that we should breakfast at Novi Varosh, four hours on; but our stomachs were not of cast iron, and we clamoured for eggs. We got them, left Negbina—that was the name of the village—about seven, and once more adventured on the road.

By eight we had passed the old Serbian frontier: the country was growing more interesting, like the foothills of the Tyrol; on the streams were inefficient-looking old wooden mills, the water rushing madly

down a slope and hitting a futile little wheel which turned laboriously.

Novi Varosh, with roofs of weathered wood gleaming purplish amongst the trees, was a wonderful little town, and quite unlike any other we had seen; clean without, and if the energy of its citizens at the village pump is a good sample, clean within also, for Serbia. Here are Turks too: ladies in veil and trousers, and trousered kiddies with clothes of orange, yellow and purple. Twice in the streets we were stopped by authority. Our lunch was well cooked, one can clearly see this has not been Serbia for long, for the Serbs are the worst eaters in the world. Jo gave medical advice to a Serb, and on once more.

On the road were travellers never ending in their variety, and one father was mounted with a pack behind him, and on the top of the pack his little daughter clad in many coloured cottons, clasping him tight round the neck and peering inquisitively from behind his ear.

About three p.m. we reached the Lim. The road climbs to a great height, and the peasants in their gay costumes were reaping, some of the fields so steep that we wondered how they stood upon them; on the opposite cliff was an old robber castle like a Rhine fortress.

The Serbian town of Prepolji introduced itself

by six Turks lying by the roadside, then there were three Turkish families, afterwards an assorted dozen of small girls in trousers, finally, an old man doddering along in a turban and a veiled beggar woman, who demanded backsheesh. "Where are the Serbs?" we thought.

The Greek church looked as if it had been new built, so that the Serbs could claim Prepolji as a Christian town, and had a biscuit tin roof not yet rusted.

Our hotel was like that where Mr. Pickwick first met Sam Weller, a large open court with a crazy wooden balcony at the second story, and the bedrooms opening on to the balcony. When we opened our knapsacks to get out washing materials, we found that the heat of the horse had melted all the chocolate in Jan's, and it had run over everything. It was a mess, but chocolate was precious, and every piece had to be rescued. We had only been ten hours in the saddle, but we descended stiffly, and were pounced on by a foolish looking man, with a head to which Jo took immediate offence. This fellow attached himself to us during the whole of our stay, and was an intolerable nuisance; we nicknamed him "glue pot," and only at our moment of departure discovered that he was the mayor who had been trying to do us honour.

The next day was Sunday, and the village full

of peasants. Stiff-legged and groaning a little within ourselves we walked about the town making observations: Turkish soldiers, Turkish policemen, Turkish recruits, but all the peasants Serb. The country costume is different from that of the north, the perpendicular stripe on the skirt has here given way to horizontal bands of colour, and some women wear a sort of exaggerated ham frill about the waist. The men's waistcoats were very ornate, and much embroidery was upon their coats.

An English nurse came into the town in the afternoon. She, a Russian girl, and an English orderly had driven from Plevlie, en route to Uzhitze. Half-way along the wheel of their carriage had broken in pieces, so they finished the road on foot. Curiously enough we had travelled from England to Malta with this lady, Sister Rawlins, on the same transport. The Russian girl had been married only the day before to a Montenegrin officer, nephew of the Sirdar Voukotitch, Commander-in-Chief of the North, and she was flying back to Russia to collect her goods and furniture.

Next day as we were sketching in the picturesque main street, from the distance came the sounds of a weird wailing, drawing slowly closer and closer.

"Hurra," thought we—two minds with but a single, etc.,—"a funeral—magnificent. Just the thing to complete the scene."

A string of donkeys came round the corner, on either flank each animal bore a case marked with a large red cross. Amongst the animals were donkey-boys, and it was from their lips came the dismal wailing. Never have we seen so ragged and wretched a crew. The boys were evidently the "unfits," and they looked it, every face showed the wan, pallid shadow of hunger and disease. A few old men in huge fur caps, with rifles on their backs, stumbled along, guarding the precious convoy. "Glue pot" led us all to a large empty building, once a Turkish merchant's store, where the cases were to be housed. The bullock carts with the heavier packages came in in the evening, and we sent the men five litres of plum brandy to put some warmth into their miserable bodies. This moved them once more to singing, but we think the songs sounded a little less dreary.

The Commandant asked for, and got, half a dozen sheets from us as a sort of superior backsheesh, and promised us horses for the morrow.

The next morning dawned dismally. Miss Rawlins and her companions were to go on by post cart, and their conveyance arrived first, only two and a half hours late. It was a sort of tinker's tent on four rickety wheels. There seemed to be barely room for one within the dark interior, but both Miss Rawlins and the little Russian climbed in

somehow. Charlie, the orderly, clung on by his eyelids in front, and off they went. We last saw two faces peering back at us beneath the fringe of the tent. They had no luck. Half-way to Uzhitze the cart upset and they were all rolled into the ditch, missing a precipice of sixty feet or so by the merest fraction.

Our own horses arrived later, we mounted, and with cheers from the assembled authorities, we rode off.

The rain came down in a steady drizzle; we discovered that the waterproof cloaks which we had borrowed from Nish were not very weathertight. We climbed right up into the clouds, but still the rain held on. From the floating mist jutted great boulders and huge red cliffs. Our guide put up an umbrella and rode along crouching beneath it. At 1400 metres we reached an inn, where we lunched. A Montenegrin commissioner insisted on paying our bill, and said that we would do the same for him when he came to England. Every one in Serbia or Montenegro is interested in ages. They were astounded at ours. They said that Jo would have been seventeen if she were Serbian; and one rose, shook Jan warmly by the hand and said he must have " navigated " the marriage well.

We rode over the frontier, but we were not yet in the real Montenegro. This is not the black

mountain where the last dregs of old Serbian aristocracy defied the Turk, this is still the Sanjak, three years ago Turkish, and with pleasant pasturages spreading on either hand.

At last we came up over Plevlie. To one corner we could see the town creeping in a crescent about the foot of a grey hill, far away on the other side was a little monastery, forlorn and white, like a shivering saint, and between a great valley with four purplish humps in the midst of the corn and maize fields, like great whales bursting through a patchwork quilt.

Our horses were thoroughly cheered up, and we passed through the long streets of the town at a lively trot, a thing Jo was taught as a child to consider bad form.

A semi-transparent little man in a black hat stood on the hotel steps beckoning to us. But we had no use for hotel touts, and waved our sticks saying, "Hospital." He seemed curiously disappointed.

The hospital, many long low buildings, lay buried in a park of trees. The staff lived in a tiny house near by, where we were welcomed by the cook, Mrs. Roworth. She explained that as the house was hardly capable of holding its ten or twelve occupants, a room had been taken for us at the inn, but that we were to meal with them.

"Not that you will like the food," she said, "for it's all tinned, and I have only twenty-five shillings a week to buy milk, bread, and fresh meat."

We wondered why, in such a fertile country, a party of hard-working people should be condemned to eat tinned mackerel and vegetables brought all the way from England?

However, the dinner was excellent—all "disguised," she said, for she had during the few weeks she had been there concentrated on the art of disguising bully beef and worse problems, and had sternly put Dr. Clemow on omelets and beefsteaks, as his digestion had caved in under six months' unadulterated tinned food.

We met old friends, fellow travellers on the way out. In those days they were a wistful little party, wondering how they were going to reach Montenegro, the Adriatic being impossible. At last one of the passes was hurriedly improved for them by a thousand prisoners, and they rode through in the snow. Since then typhus had raged, two of their number had been very ill, and one had died. Their energy had been tremendous, and everywhere in the country they were spoken of as the wonderful English hospital, and even from Chainitza, where there was a Russian hospital, soldiers walked a long day's march in order to be treated by the English.

Dr. Roger's rival was there, the perpetrator of ninety hernia operations a week—or was it more ?

All this on tinned food !

Our hotel room proved large and comfortable with a talkative willing Turk in attendance. We slept immensely and were wakened by yet another horrible cock crowing. All Balkan cocks seem to have bronchitis.

Plevlie is a red-tiled nucleus with a fringe of wood-roofed Serb houses planted round it. There are ten mosques, while the only Greek church stands forlorn on the other side of the great hollow two miles away.

The town is not really Montenegrin. It has the cosmopolitan character of all the Sanjak, Turks, Austro-Turks and Serbs—a mixture like that at Marseilles or Port Said.

The shops are Turkish, though their turbaned owners, sitting cross-legged on the floor-counters, can speak only Serb—a thing which puzzled us at the time.

We saw veiled women and semi-veiled children everywhere, thickly latticed windows with curious eyes peeping through, and yards with high wooden palings above to prevent the possible young men on the houses opposite from catching a glimpse of the fair ladies in the gardens.

Plenty of long-legged Montenegrin officers—with

flat caps bearing the King's initials, and five rings representing the dynasties of the ruling house—filled the streets, and also the inevitable ragged soldiers with gorgeous bags on their backs.

Some of the women, too, were wearing these caps, but theirs were yet smaller and tipped over their noses, like the pork pie hat of our grandmothers. One closely veiled woman showed the silhouette sticking up through her veil just like a blacking tin.

The Mahommedan is much more fanatic in these parts than his more civilized brother of Salonika or Constantinople. Women of the two religions do not visit. The hatred is partially political, and Jo began to realize that her dream of visiting a harem would not be easy to achieve. We met three women walking down a lonely street. Although their faces were covered with several thicknesses of black chiffon, they modestly placed them against the wall and stood there, three shapeless bundles, until we were out of sight.

Jan's feelings were very much hurt, but he soon got used to being treated like a dangerous dragon.

When we reached our hotel again we found the élite of the town waiting in the bar-room for us. There was a huge jolly Greek priest, all big hat and velvet, the prefect, the schoolmaster, a linguist,

and the little black-hatted man whom we had mistaken for a hotel tout.

The priest was president of the Montenegrin Red Cross, the prefect was a former Prime Minister and a Voukotitch. All important men who are not Petroviches are Voukotitches; the first being members of the king's and the second of the queen's family.

The little black-hatted man was secretary of the Red Cross, and was formally attached to us while there as cicerone. He explained to us that they had all been in the hotel expecting us the night before, with a beautiful dinner which had been prepared in our honour.

We apologized and inwardly noted the grateful temperament of the Montenegrin. We were solemnly treated to coffee and brandy, and the jolly priest emptied his cigarette box into Jo's lap. When the first polite ceremoniousness had worn off we asked delicately about the front.

"Did we wish to see the front?"

Certainly, said the prefect, we should have the first horses that should come back to the town, and the little transparent shadow man should accompany us. And our letter to the Sirdar Voukotitch, commander in chief of the north?—He should be told about it on his return that evening from the front.

At sunset the muezzin sounded, cracked voices cried unmelodiously from all the minaret tops. Immediately, as if it were their signal, all the crows arose from the town, hovered around in batches for a moment, chattering, and flew away up the hill to roost in the trees round the hospital till sunrise.

Salonika rings with children's cries, Dawson city with the howlings of dogs, but the towns of the Sanjak have no better music than the croaking of carrion crows.

CHAPTER V

THE MONTENEGRIN FRONT ON THE DRINA

When Jan awoke it was dark, and he was with difficulty rousing Jo when suddenly a voice howled through the keyhole that the horses were waiting. Jan grabbed his watch—5 a.m.; but the horses had been ordered for six. Hastily chewing dry biscuit, Jan jumped into his clothes and ran down. There was a small squat youth with a flabby Mongolian face hovering between the yard door and the inn, and Jan following him discovered three horses saddled and waiting. He hastily ordered white coffee to be prepared, and ran up again to hurry Jo and to pack. He rushed down again to pay the bill, but found that the Montenegrin Red Cross had charged itself with everything, very generously, so he ran up once more to nag at Jo. The secretary, whom we called "the shadow," had not appeared, so we inquired from the squint-eyed youth, received many "Bogamis" as answer, but nothing definite; so we decided, as it was now past six, that he had changed his mind and had sent this chinee-looking fellow, whom we named "Bogami," in his place.

Jan's horse was like an early "John" drawing of a slender but antiquated siren, all beautiful curves. Jo's would in England long ago have taken the boat to Antwerp; her saddle stood up in a huge hump behind and had a steeple in front, and was covered by what looked like an old bearskin hearthrug in a temper, one stirrup like a fire shovel was yards too long, the other far too short, and were set well at the back.

"What queer horses!" we remarked.

"Bogami," said Bogami; "when there are no horses these are good horses, Bogami."

"Where is the secretary?"

"Bogami nesnam" (don't know).

From Uzhitze we had good horses, from Prepolji moderate, now these; imagination staggered at what we should descend to if we did a fourth lap to Cettinje, for instance, but we climbed up. Jo with her queerly placed stirrups perched forward something like a racing cyclist. Bogami's horse was innocent of garniture, save for a piece of chain bound about its lower jaw, but he slung his great coat over the saw edge of its backbone and leapt on. He must have had a coccyx of cast iron. We had to kick the animals into a walk—there were fifty kilometres to go.

After a while we began to wonder if it would not be quicker to get off and foot it, but we did

catch up and eventually pass a Red Cross Turk. We saw a soldier striding ahead. By kicks and shouts we raised a sprint along the level road; we drew even with him, and then began a race; on the uphills we beat him, on the downhills he caught up and passed in front. He was a taciturn fellow, and save that he was going to Fochar we learnt nothing about him. On a long uphill we gained a hundred yards, and by supreme efforts held our gains. He eventually disappeared from view, and we were rejoicing at our speed when we realized that the telegraph wires were no longer with us—one can always find the nearest way by following the telegraph, for governments do not waste wire. Jan looked for them and found them streaming away to the left, and among them, well up on the horizon, our enemy the soldier.

"Look," we cried to Bogami, "isn't that the shortest way? The wires go there."

"Bogami," he replied; "wires can, horses can't, bogami."

There is a fine military road to Chainitza, made by the Austrians, but it remains a white necklace on the hills, almost an ornament to the landscape. No one seemed to use it, while our old Turkish road which snaked and twisted up and down was pitted with the hoofs of countless horses. It is a stony path, and our animals were shod with flat

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plates instead of horseshoes; they slipped and slithered, and we wondered if in youth they had ever had lessons in skating.

There was a heavy mist, but it began to break up, and through peepholes one caught fleeting glimpses of distant patterning of field and forest, and hints of great hills. The sun showed like a great pale moon on the horizon. There were other travellers on the old Turkish trail, horsemen, Bosnians in great dark claret-coloured turbans, or Montenegrins in their flat khaki caps, peasants in dirty white cotton pyjamas, thumping before them animals with pack-swollen sides, soldiers only recognizable from the peasants by the rifle on their backs, and Turks; most were jolly fellows, and hailed us cheerfully.

From a house by the roadside burst a sheep, followed by five men. They chased the animal down the road whistling to it. We had never heard that whistling was effectual with sheep, and certainly it did not succeed very well in this instance.

Somewhere beyond this house Jan's inside began to cry for food, two biscuits and a cup of *café au lait* being little upon which to found a long day's riding. He tentatively tried a "compressed luncheon." Its action was satisfactory, but whether it resulted from real nourishment contained in the

black-looking glue, or whether it came from a sticking together of the coating of the stomach, we have not yet decided. Jo preferred rather to endure the hunger.

Bogami had quite a charm; for instance, he appreciated our troubles with the beasts we were riding. Jo's horse stumbled a good deal on the downhills; her saddle was very uncomfortable and so narrow that she could never change her position. We came into most magnificent scenery, the beauty of which made a deep impression even upon our empty selves. There were deep green valleys, rising to peaks and hills which faded away ridge behind ridge of blue into the distant Serbian mountains, great pine woods of delicate drooping trees which came down and folded in on every side, and though it was almost September there were strawberries still ripe at the edge of the road, little red luscious blobs amidst the green.

Metalka at one o'clock, and we were on the real Montenegrin frontier. There are two Metalkas, a Montenegrin and an Austrian, and they are divided one from the other by a strip of land some ten yards across which rips the village in two like the track of a little cyclone. Bogami directed us to a shanty labelled "Hotel of Europe." A large woman was blocking the door; we demanded food, she took no

notice. Hunger was clamouring within us. We demanded a second time. She waved her hand majestically to her rival in Austria, at whose tables Montenegrin officers were sitting with coffee.

An officer greeted us.

"We had expected you yesterday," he said.

We waved to the horses.

"No horses."

"That is a pity," he murmured. "You see, there was something to eat yesterday!"

In spite of his pessimism we got eggs and wine. Bogami had a large crowd, to whom he lectured, and we sent him out some eggs.

After lunch we pushed on, in conquered territory. To Chainitza they said was one hour and a half, it proved nearer three.

We joined some peasants, and they told us that they were going to the great festival. The old mother halted at a sort of sheep pen by the roadside; when she rejoined us she was wiping her eyes.

"That was my brother," she explained; "he was killed in the war;" for it is the custom to erect memorial stones by the roadside. Many of these are very quaint, sometimes painted with a soldier, or else with the rifle, sword, pistols and medals of the deceased.

Chainitza lies in a backwater, where the deep valley makes a sudden bend. When we came to it the sun was in our eyes, and halfway between the crest and the river the town seemed to float in a bluish mist; two white mosques stood out against the trees, and the roof of one was not one dome, but many like an inverted egg frier, or almost as though it was boiling over.

We were stopped at the entry by a sentry.

"Where are you going?"

"To the Russian Hospital."

He took us in charge and led us, in spite of protestations, to the hotel. A man in a shabby frock-coat received us, and Jo, mistaking him for the innkeeper, clamoured once more for the Russians. The shabby man explained that he was the Prefect, and that this was a State reception. We began to be awed by our own dignity. We explained to him that the Shadow had changed his mind and had sent Bogami instead.

Bogami brought our knapsacks to our room, where he was immobilized by the sight of himself in the looking-glass of the wardrobe; probably he had never seen such a thing before, and he goggled at it. He at last backed slowly from the room.

We rested a while, then descended to find—the Shadow.

He was rather hurt with us, and wanted to know why the —— we had gone off without him. We explained, compared watches, and found that Jan's was an hour too fast. The poor Shadow had been chasing us on a borrowed horse, with our permissions to travel in his pocket, and wildly hoping that he would catch us up before we were arrested as spies.

We had tea with the Russians in a little arbour on the roadside, and chewed sweets which had just arrived from Petrograd, having been three months on the journey, but none the worse for that. Many officers came, amongst them the husband of the little Russian girl we had met at Prepolji. They all seemed to be Voukotitches, and at last the Sirdar himself honoured us. He is a huge man, and yet seemed to take up more room than his size warrants. He has a flat, almost plate-like face, with pallid blue eyes which seemed to focus some way beyond the object of his regard. Were his moustache larger he would be rather like Lord Kitchener, and he was very pleased at the obvious compliment. He poses a little, moves seldom but suddenly, and shoots his remarks as though words of command. He was very kind to us, and was immensely astonished at Jo's Serbian, holding up his hands and saying "Kako" at every one of her speeches. He suggested that poor Bogami should

be beaten, but we begged him off. Captain Voukotitch, the husband of a day, was appointed to be our guide for the morrow—because Jo spoke Serbian.

After tea we went up to the bubbly mosque, which was in reality the Greek church. We entered a large gate; on the one side of a yard was the church, and on the other a big two-storied rest-house, where one could lodge while paying devotions or doing pilgrimages. Its long balconies were filled with country folk all come for the festival, and who were feasting and laughing as though the war did not exist. The court-yard was filled with men and women in Bosnian costumes, white and dark red embroideries. Through the open door of the church one could see the silhouettes of the peasants bowing before the Ikons and relics. It was almost dark, and one man began to play a little haunting melody upon a wooden pipe, but though they linked arms and shuffled their feet, the young men did not dance.

At supper the Shadow revealed a quaint sense of humour, and so to bed.

The next morning was lovely, and we started at seven with the youngest Voukotitch and the others. Some officers had lent us their horses, and Voukotitch had proudly produced his English

saddle for Jo. On the road the spirit of mischief entered him.

"You can ride all right," he said; "wouldn't you like to go to the nearest machine-gun to the Austrian lines?"

"Rather," said Jo.

"You'll have to do some stiff riding, though. I know the major, and he is bored to death. He'll let us."

"But what about the bullets?" said the Shadow.

In time the major was produced, emerging from a cottage by the roadside, other officers with him, and we had a merry coffee party in an arbour. One told Jo that he was a lawyer. The few Montenegrins who had the misfortune to be educated were not allowed to serve at the front, but he had been lucky enough through influence to be allowed to take a commission. He had not seen much serious fighting, however, as no move had been made for several months.

Then we tackled the hills. "Come along," said the major, cheerfully; and his horse's nose went down and its tail went up, and off it slid downhill. We had seen the Italian officers do such things on the cinematograph, but little thought that we should be in the same position. We supposed it would be all right. Jo's horse became

nearly vertical, and she sat back against its tail. Jan followed. Sometimes a sheet of rock was across the path—then we slid; sometimes the sand became very soft—we slid again. Then a muddy bit, and the horse squelched down on his hind quarters.

Here we met a Serbian captain who was in charge of the battery. He was very lonely, and delighted to have a chance to talk, and he talked hard all day, showed us a neat reservoir his men had built, explained to us that beautiful uniforms were coming from Russia soon for the weirdly garbed beings who were guarding the hills, and asked us to lunch behind the trenches under a canopy of boughs.

While lunch was being prepared he took us round his artillery, and into his observation station on the top of a crooked tree. Below us we could see the river Dreina—on the other side of which was Gorazhda, held by the Austrians—and the fortified hills behind.

It seemed impossible that this wide peaceful scene was menacing with a threat of death, yet at intervals one could hear a faint "pop! pop!" as though far-away giants were holding feast and opening great champagne bottles. Away in the hills could be seen an encampment of white tents, which caused a mild excitement, for they

had not been there the day before, and we were told that they were quite out of range.

During lunch the youngest Voukotitch tempted the major—who was in splendid mood—suggesting that it was rather tame to go home after having come within mere bowing distance of the Austrians, and that a few stray bullets would not incommode us.

The major saw reason fairly quickly, so we bestrode our horses again and continued our switchback course. At an open space where the Austrians could shoot at us if they wished we had to plunge down the hill quickly, keeping a distance of one hundred yards from each other.

The little Shadow prudently got off his horse and used its body as a shield.

We banged at the door of a cottage, and a young lieutenant came out; somebody said he was nineteen and a hero.

Here we left our horses and began to scramble through brambles along a narrow path, climbing up the back of a little hill on the crest of which were the machine guns. Just before we got to the top we plunged into a tunnel which bored through the hill; at the end was the gun. The hero scrambled in, wriggled the gun about and explained. He invited Jo to shoot. She squashed past him; there

SERB AND MONTENEGRIN OFFICERS ON THE DRINA.

A CONCEALED GUN EMPLACEMENT ON THE DRINA.

was a knob at the back of the gun on which she pressed her thumbs, and she immediately wanted another pair with which to stop her ears. The gun jammed suddenly. The hero pulled the belt about, and Jo set it going once more.

The Austrian machine guns answered back and kept this up, so Jo pressed the knob again and yet again. Then we got into the trenches above. Whenever Jo popped her head over the trenches for a good look there were faint reports from the mountain opposite. One or two bullets whizzed over our heads, and we realized that they were aiming at Jo's big white hat.

Jan climbed down the hill and took snap-shots of Gorazhda; the enemy got a couple of pretty near shots at him.

When the Montenegrins thought this sport was becoming monotonous they remembered the business of the day. A big house in Gorazhda was said to be full of Hungarian officers, and they wanted to get the range of this with one of the big guns. This decision had been made a day or two before with much deliberation. This they thought the State could afford. The precious shell was brought out, and every one fondled it.

Men were called out and huge preparations were made for sighting and taking aim. We

scuttled round with field glasses, and finally stood on tiptoe behind branches on a mound by the side of the gun. There were many soldiers fussing in the dug-out, and at last they pulled the string.

" Goodness! Now we've done it," Jo thought, as the mountains sent back the fearful report in decreasing echoes. We seemed to wait an eternity, and then " something white " happened far beyond the village.

The officers looked at each other with long faces. " A bad miss—the expense."

We felt the resources of the Montenegrin Empire were tottering. Awful! Could they afford another?

Finally, with great courage, they decided that it was better to spend two shells on getting a decent aim than to lose one for nothing. The terrific bang went off again, and this time the " something white " happened right on the roof of the house. The Hungarian officers all ran out, and the machine guns below jabbered at them. Nobody was killed as far as we know, but every one was content and delighted.

Sunset was approaching, and we rode away quickly, only stopping once to drag a reluctant old Turk from the mountain side and make him sing to the accompaniment of a one-stringed goosla.

He hated to do it as all his best songs were about triumphant Mahommedans crushing Serbs, and of course he couldn't sing those.

He sat grumpily cross-legged on the ground, encircled by our horses, droning a song of two notes, touching the string quickly with the flat lower part of his fingers.

We left him very suddenly because the darkness comes quickly in those hills, so we made for the high-road as hard as we could.

We rode fast to the Colonel's cottage, sat down to the dinner table, which was decked with pale blue napkins, and a fine-looking old Voukotitch, an ex-M.P. in national costume, acted as butler. In spite of his seventy odd years he had joined the army as a common soldier. He refused all invitations to sit with us, for he knew his place. The young husband was his nephew, and they kissed fondly on leave-taking.

We rode back in the moonlight. At one spot on the road was a sawmill, and the huge white pine logs lying all about looked like the fallen columns of some ruined Athenian temple. We tried to enjoy the moment, and to brush aside the awful thought that we must remount Rosinante and Co. next day.

The Shadow was terribly puffed up about his feat. The following morning as we were

sketching in the town, an officer approached respectfully.

"His excellency the Sirdar invites you to supper," he said.

We considered a moment, for we had intended to return to Plevlie. The Shadow broke in.

"It is inconvenient to come to supper," he said to our horror. "Tell his excellency that the gentleman and lady will come to lunch if he wishes it."

The Sirdar meekly sent answer that lunch would suit him very well, and we could drive back with him to Plevlie. "Would we come to his house at 12.30?"

The Prefect told us that we ought to go to the lunch at twelve, because the Sirdar's clock was always half an hour fast. We arrived, but the Sirdar evidently had been considering us, he did not appear for the half an hour, so we sat with his staff sipping rakia by the roadside.

The lunch was excellent, but the Sirdar's carriage, like every other carriage in Montenegro, was a weird, ancient, rusty arabesquish affair, tied together with wire. We had two resplendent staff officers, armed to the teeth, who galloped ahead, we had two superior non-coms., also armed to the dentals, galloping behind, while on the box sat a man with gun, pistols, sword, dagger and a

bottle of wine and water which we passed round whenever the Sirdar became hoarse. The coachman was as old and as shabby as his carriage, and every five miles or so was forced to descend and tie up yet another mishap with wire—ordinary folks' carriages are only repaired with string.

The Sirdar occupied almost the whole of the back seat, and Jo was squeezed into the crack which was left. Jan was perched on a sort of ledge, facing them. The carriage was narrow, six legs were two too many for the space. Jan's were the superfluous ones. He tried this pose, he tried that, but in spite of his contortions he endured much of the seven hours' journey in acute discomfort and the latter part in torture.

In spite of his throat the Sirdar did nearly all the talking. The country we were passing through were scenes of his battles: with one arm he threw a company over this hill, with a hand, nearly hitting Jan in the eye, he marched an army corps along that valley; he explained how he had been forced to give up the Ministry of War because there was no other efficient commander for the north.

A blue ridge of pine trees appeared on our right hand.

"You see those hills," said the Sirdar: "I'll tell you the story of a reply of mine, a funny reply. I ordered a general last winter to march across those

hills. He said that the troops would starve. I looked him in the eye. Then you will eat wolves, I shouted. He went."

If we passed peasants he stopped them. He seemed to have an extraordinary memory for names and faces.

"Never forget a face," he said, "never forget its name. That is the secret of popularity."

He was very anxious that we should go to Cettinje and to Scutari. He kindly promised to see about it, to arrange for our horses and to have our passage telegraphed before us. At Podgoritza he said a government motor-car should wait for us. He advised us to make a detour from the straight road and to see the famous black lake of Jabliak and the Dormitor mountains. We thanked him gratefully. He waved our thanks aside.

"And I will write to my friend the Minister of War. He will arrange that you go to Scutari." He then explained all the reasons why Montenegro should hold Scutari when the war was over.

"It was ours," he said; "we only gave it up to Venice so that she should protect us from the Turk. If we do not hold Scutari, Montenegro can never become a state, so if we cannot keep her we might as well give up Cettinje. After all we are but taking back what was once ours."

He was daily expecting the uniforms from Russia, and asked every soldier on the road for news. At last one said that he had seen them.

" The stuff is rather thin, your excellency, but the boots are splendid."

CHAPTER VI

NORTHERN MONTENEGRO

We were accosted by a clean-limbed, joyous youth, who bore on his cap the outstretched winged badge of the police. He said—

"Mister Sirdar, he tell me take you alon' o' Nickshitch."

Sure enough the next morning there he was, with three horses, which if not the identical animals of our Chainitza trip were sisters or brothers to them. It was a wretched day, gusty, and the rain sweeping round the corners of the old streets. Early as was the hour, the wretched prisoners were peering through the lattice windows of their prison, which evidently once had been the harem of some wealthy Turk; where beauties had once lain on voluptuous couches, wretched criminals now crouched half-starved, racked with disease, and as we passed held out skinny arms. All Montenegrin saddles are bound on with string, even those of the highest in the land; indeed, one cannot imagine how the people did before string was invented, and

ours began to slip before we were well clear of the town. Necessary adjustments were made, and on once more.

Our guide was well armed—he carried two murderous-looking pistols, and a long rifle slung over his back. He was in high spirits and showed us that the proper way to ride Montenegrin horses was to drop the reins on to the animal's neck, kick it in the stomach with both feet, elevating your arms and uttering the most unearthly yells. Thus terrified, the unfortunate wreck would canter a few yards, and our cicerone would turn in his saddle and grin back at us, who were humanely contented with the solemn jog-trot of our aged steeds along the well-worn horse-track—for there was no road.

We crawled along, wretched in the downpour, the scenery completely hidden by the clouds; but towards midday, as we climbed ever higher and higher, we plunged into pine forests where the rain began to thin to mist, veiling the trees with layers of drifting fog. Out of the forests we came—the rain having ceased—into a strange-looking landscape, whose japanesiness is equalled possibly only by Japan itself. There were the queer rounded hills, the gnarled and twisted little pines and dim fir-clad slopes cutting the sky with sharp grey silhouettes.

Here we stopped to eat. We opened a tin of

meat and made rough sandwiches with the coarse brown or black bread which is the staple food of Serbian nations. When we were satisfied there was meat left in the tin. Two wretched, ragged children came on the road singing some half-Eastern chant, and we hailed them. They refused the food with dignity, and marched on offended.

We came to the Grand Canyon of Colorado—we beg its pardon—of Montenegro, The Tara. Great cliffs towered high on either side, great grey, rugged cliffs topped with pine and scrub oak. Down, down, down to the river, an hour, and we crossed the bridge out of Novi Bazar into Montenegro—thirty years free from the Turk. We halted at a little coffee stall made of boughs. Jan wanted to get a photo, but the women were so shy that Jo had to push them out into the open.

On the way up the other cliff our guide became communicative. He had been in America, in the mining camps, and spoke fair American.

"In ole days, dese was de borders," he said; "'ere de Serb, 'n dere de Turk. Natchurally dey 'ate each oder. Dey waz two fellers 'ad fair cold feet, one 'ere, one over dere, Turk 'n our chapy. Every day dey come down to de ribber 'n dey plug 't de odder chap wid dere ole pistols what filled at de nose. But dey neber hit nuttin. One day de Serb 'e got mad and avade in de ribber, but 'e did'n 'it

de Turk. Nex' day dey bot' avade in 'arf way across. Dey miss again. De tird day dey avades in rite ter de middle, 'n each shoots up de odder dead. Yessir, 'n dere bodies float down ter 'ere."

He looked up and pointed.

"Dey was a gooman up dere," he said.

"A gooman?"

"Yes, a man wat 'ad a gooman all to 'isself."

"!!!!"

"Dey was an ole town all made o' stones," our guide explained, "where dis man made 'is gooman. You know wat a gooman is?—kill all de fellers what pass 'n do wat you likes."

We understood suddenly that "Government" was indicated.

"Dat's wat I say," he answered, "gooman—'e was killed by a Montenegrin chap wat throwed 'im orf de cliffs, 'n a Turk gets all 'is land. Dat's 'ow dey was done dose days. Dere ain't much 'o de ole town lef' now."

"We 'ad to chase de Turk outer 'ere," he went on; "lots 'o fighting, but we 'ad luck. You see, dey 'ad two lines, 'an we got de first line before 'e was ready, 'n wiped 'im out, so de secon' line did'n know if it was 'im retreatin' or us advancin', and we was into 'em before dey 'ad made up dere minds. Yessir."

The ascent was terribly laborious. Our animals

were sweating, though they were carrying nothing but the knapsacks.

"Ye see dat flat stone?" said the guide. "Dat's were de gooman feller 'ide 'is gold. Dey was tree Italians chaps 'ere 'n dey turn ober dat stone ter roll it downill. 'N underneat was all dat feller's gold. Dat madum larf, I tell yer."

We climbed higher and yet higher; we thought we would never reach the crest. The sweat poured from us, and we were drenched.

On the top there were but few stones of the old castle, and we rode over the ruins. We passed into a queer pallid country, pale grey houses, pale yellow or pale green fields, grey sky and stones, a violently rolling plain where our guide lost his way, and we became increasingly aware of the discomfort of our saddles, and prayed for the journey to end.

We refound the route, and asked a peasant, "How far to Jabliak?"

"Bogami, quarter of an hour."

We cheered.

At the end of twenty minutes we asked once more.

"Bogami, quarter of an hour."

At the end of twenty minutes more we asked again, our spirits were falling.

"Bogami, quarter of an hour."

"* * *!"

We then asked a peasant and his wife. The woman considered for a moment.

"About an hour," she said.

Her husband turned and swore at her.

"Bogami, don't believe her, gentlemen," he cried, "it's only a quarter of an hour."

We left them quarrelling.

It grew dark, and we grew miserable. Jabliak seemed like a dream, and we like poor wandering Jews, cursed ever to roam on detestable saddles in this queer pallid country.

At last a peasant said it was five minutes off, and then it really was a quarter of an hour distant.

We came down from the hills to find the whole aristocracy—one captain—not to say all their populace, out on the green to do us honour. They had been informed by telegraph of our august decision to sleep in their wooden village. When we got off our horses our knees were so cramped that we could scarcely stand, and we hobbled after the captain into a bitterly cold room without furniture. Various Montenegrins came and looked at us, and an old veterinary surgeon, also *en route*, but in the opposite direction, conversed in bad German. The old vet. was a Roumanian, and the only animal doctor in all Montenegro.

To their great surprise we demanded something to eat.

"Supper is at nine," they said severely.

"But we have had nothing since ten this morning," we protested.

"But supper will be ready at nine," they said again.

After a lot of trouble we got some scrambled eggs, but nothing would persuade our guide, whose name, by the way, was "Mike," to have anything. It almost seemed improper to eat at the wrong hours, even if one was hungry.

After supper we sat growing colder and colder. At last, in desperation, we asked if there were no place in the village which had a fire.

"Oh yes, there is a fire in the other café," and thither we were conducted.

We were in a jolly wooden room, with a blazing stove and a most welcome fugginess. The hostess brought us rakia, coffee and walnuts, and did her utmost to make us comfortable. Montenegrins crowded in, and discussed the probable end of the war. There was little enthusiasm shown, most of the talk was of the hardships, and a little grumbling that the farms were going to pieces because of the lack of men.

Before leaving Plevlie, Dr. Clemow had

presented Jan with a box of Red Cross cigars, and he handed one to the captain. The official received it gratefully.

"Ah!" he said. "Cigars, eh! One does not often see those nowadays."

The cigar was a Trichinopoli. Jan said nothing, but watched. The captain lit the cigar manfully, and for some minutes puffed, looking the apotheosis of aristocracy. Presently his puffing ceased, he looked thoughtful, and then saying that he had forgotten an important paper which he had not signed, he fled. We found the cigars most useful afterwards, as a sort of spiritual disinfector, infallible against bores.

Into the cracks of the ceiling were stuck white and yellow flowers, thyme and other plants, till the roof looked like an inverted flower-bed. We had noticed this custom before, and asked Mike if it had any significance.

"Oh yes," he answered, "all dose tings, dey stuck up dere 'gainst de fleas 'n bugs."

This was translated into Serbian, and the woman boxed his ears.

We supped on meat—three courses—meat, meat, meat, and so tough that our teeth bounced off, and we were compelled to bolt the morsels whole. One course tired us out, weary as we already were with our journey, but Mike, making up for his

former abstinence, wolfed all his own share and what remained over from ours.

The night was so cold that we went to bed in our clothes, and even then could not sleep for hours.

We woke with difficulty to a glorious day, and found that what we had thought yesterday to be a plain was in truth a great plateau surrounded by towering grey mountains on which were gulfs and gullies filled with eternal snow. Jabliak is a queer village, fifty or sixty weathered wooden houses—with the high-peaked roof of Northern Serbia—flung down into this wilderness, where the grass and crops fight for existence with the pushing stones, and where the summer is so short that the captain's plum tree—the only one—will not ripen save in exceptional years. Never a wheel comes to Jabliak, and so it is a village without streets. Everything which passes here is horse- or woman-borne, and for hay they use long narrow sledges which slide over the stones and slippery grass as though it were snow.

"Urrgh," said a man, "you should see this in winter. Snow ten and twelve feet deep, and only just the roofs and the tops of the telegraph-poles emerging."

The village escorted us to see the famous Black Lake below the peaks of Dormitor.

The lake is beautiful enough, but too big for mystery, too small to be impressive. One had imagined it twinkling like the wicked pupil of a witch's eye, with cornea of white stones and eyelashes of pine trees, and we desecrated even its stillness by shooting at wild duck with a rifle.

Jan had been describing to the villagers how well Jo rode; they now think he is a liar. Her horse took an unexpected jump at a small obstacle; the huge hump at the back of the saddle rose suddenly, threw her forward, and before she had realized anything, she was hanging almost upside down about the horse's neck, helpless because of the enormous steeple in front. This horse, as though quite used to similar occurrences, stood quietly contemplative, till Mike had restored her to a perpendicular.

Then on again. At times the tracks grew very muddy, and the horses side-slipped a good deal. At the top of a pass we halted to get coffee from a leafy hut. Before us were the mountains of Voynik, a blue ridge with shadowy, strange crevasses and cliffs; behind us Dormitor was still visible, a faint stain on the sky, as though that great canopy had been dragging edges in the dew.

Four women clambered up towards us. When they had reached the top they flung down their enormous knapsacks and sat down. They were a

cheery, pretty set, and we asked them where they were going.

"To the front," they said.

"What for?"

"Those are for our husbands and brothers," answered they, patting the huge coloured knapsacks.

"How far have you to walk?" we asked.

"Four more days."

"And how far have you walked?"

"Four days."

No complaining, no repining, just a statement of fact, these women were cheerfully tramping eight days with bundles weighing from 45 to 50 pounds upon their backs, to take a few luxuries, or necessities, to their fighting kin.

We bade them a jolly farewell, wished them luck, and started downhill.

The track became so steep that we had to descend from our horses and walk, and so we came to Shavnik.

Shavnik is not of wood; it is stone, and as we came into its little square—with the white river-bed on one side—we realized that no welcome attended us. To our indignant dismay the inn was full, and no telegram from the "State" had arrived.

We learned that in Montenegro are two kinds

PEASANT WOMEN OF THE MOUNTAINS.

A VILLAGE OF NORTH MONTENEGRO.

of travellers—royalties and nobodies. Royalties are done for, nobodies do the best they can. We found a not overclean room over a shop—there was nothing better—we had already experienced worse: so we ordered supper, and went off to the telegraph station, to make sure that we arrived as "Royalty" at the next stop.

A man suddenly burst into the office, crying, "Sirdar! Sirdar!"

Jo and Jan made their way through the darkness to the inn, squeezed between sweating horses to the door. We were admitted.

The Sirdar received us kindly, but was dreadfully tired, and looked years older than he had two days before. He had ridden some 150 kilometres in sixteen hours, had left Chainitza at two o'clock in the morning, and had been in the saddle ever since. He is a famous horseman, but is no longer young. Almost all his escort had succumbed to the speed, and he was full of the story of his orderly's horse which had done 300 kilometres in four days, and was the only animal which had come through with him, he having changed mounts at Plevlie. We left him and went straight to bed.

Just as we were comfortably dozing off, a man burst into the room and demanded "Mike," and said something about a horse. Jan dressed hurriedly and clattered downstairs. It was pitch

dark. He ran to the stable, felt his way in, and struck a match. There were two horses, one was lying on its side, evidently foundered and dying but Jan felt that they would not have disturbed him for that. By matchlight again he found that his own horses had been turned out by the Sirdar's orderly, and that one was missing. Mike was not to be found, but the missing horse was discovered by a small boy in the dry river-bed apparently in search of water. Jan retired to his bedroom to find that in his absence two more strangers had burst in, to Jo's indignation. He pushed them out and locked the door.

When we awoke the Sirdar had already retaken his whirlwind course—evidently grave news called him to Cettinje—leaving the orderly's gallant horse dead behind him.

"He kills many horses," said a peasant, shaking his head; "he rides fast—always."

We crossed the dry bed of the river and prepared for the hill in front of us. Suddenly Mike's horse plunged into a bog. The poor beast sprawled in the treacherous green up to its stomach, and, thinking its last hour had come, groaned loudly. Mike threw himself from the saddle, and with great effort at last extracted his horse, which emerged trembling and dripping with slime. Mike grinned ruefully.

"I orter remembered," he admitted. "Sirdar, 'e get in dere one day 'imself."

This day's riding was the worst we had yet experienced. Our horses were fagged, the road abominable, great stones everywhere on the degenerated Turkish roads.

The Turkish road is a narrowish path of flat paving-stones laid directly upon mother earth: but that is the first stage. In the second stage the paving-stones have begun to turn and lie like slates on a roof; in the third they have turned completely on edge, like a row of dominoes, and the horses, stepping delicately between the obstacles, pound the exposed earth to deep trenches of semi-liquid mud. In the fourth stage the stones have entirely disappeared, leaving only the trenches which the horses have formed, so that the path is like a sheet of violently corrugated iron. Most of the tracks are now between the third and fourth stages of degeneration. One never knows how far the horse will plunge his legs into the trenches, for sometimes they are very shallow, and sometimes the leg is engulfed to the shoulder.

Jan's horse slipped over one domino, went up to the shoulder into a trench, and off came the rider. Luckily he fell upon a heap of stones, and not into the mud, but he decided for all that to walk for a bit.

Every now and then one came across traces of the construction of a great road—white new stone embankments that started out of nothing, and went to nowhere, and Mike confessed that he had lost the path once more—

"When I come out of dat confounded mod!"

After a hustle across country we found the road, and wished that we had not, for it was a Turkish track in its most belligerent form.

At last we reached the top and rested awhile. Mike showed us his revolver.

"He good revolver," he said. "De las' man I shoot he killin' a vooman. I come. He run away. I tell 'im to stop, but he no stop, so I shoot 'im leg. 'E try to 'it me wi' a gon."

The man got fourteen years.

We pushed on again, and on the road picked up an overcoat, which later we were able to restore to its owner, a Turk, who was going to Nickshitch to buy sugar and salt for Plevlie.

Bits of the big white road appeared and reappeared with insistence. We asked who was responsible for its inception.

"Sirdar," said Mike; "he good boy. Much work."

The country was now like brown velvet spread over heaps of gigantic potatoes.

Our horses grew slower and slower, and the inn which we were seeking seemed ever further and further away. We passed many peasants, and had evidently entered the land of Venus, for each one was more beautiful than the neighbour. Since Jabliak we had not seen an ugly man or woman, and the dignity of their carriage was exceeded only by the nobleness of their features. Ugly women must be valuable in these parts, and probably marry early; humans ever prize the rare above the beautiful.

Mike spoke to many of the girls, asking them their names and of their homes. One had his own name—which we forget—and he said that she must be his cousin, and that if she would wait where she was he would come back later and give her a lift.

At last we came to the wooden inn.

The better-class inns have dining-room and kitchen separate, the second-class both are one, but in each case the fire is made on a heap of earth piled in the centre of the floor; there is no chimney, and the smoke fills the room with a blue haze, smarting in the eyes; it drifts up to the roof, where hams are hung, and finds its way out through the cracks in the wooden roofing slats. This inn was second-class, and along one wall was a deep trough, in which were four huge lumps of a white substance

which puzzled us. First we thought it was snow, but that seemed impossible; then we thought it was salt—but why?

It was snow, there being no water fit to drink, so the snow was stored in the winter in huge underground cellars.

We got coffee and kaimak—a sort of cross between sour milk and cream cheese—and as a great honour the lady of the house, a villainously dirty-looking woman, brought us two eggs. Jan's was bad, but he put it aside, saying nothing, for it is impossible to explain to these people what is a "bad" egg—all are alike to them.

We took an affectionate leave of Mike, for here we degenerated to a carriage, which was waiting us, and he rode off, dragging our tired horses behind him.

As we were getting into the carriage the dirty woman ran up and, before Jo could ward it off, planted a loving kiss on either cheek.

We flung our weary limbs upon the rusty cushions. Our driver was a cheery fellow, who only answered "quite" to everything we said. We drove through miles of country so stony that all the world had turned grey as though it had remembered how old it was. The road twisted and curled about the mountains like the flourish of Corporal Trim's stick: below one could see the road, only half

a mile off as the crow flies, but a good five miles by the curves. We were blocked by a great hay-cart. Our driver shouted and cursed without effect, so he climbed down from the box, and, running round the hay, slashed the driver of it with his whip. We expected a free fight, but nothing occurred. When the hay had modestly drawn aside, we found "only a girl." Poor thing! she looked rueful enough.

The road was the best we had seen in all the Balkans, white and well-surfaced like an English country highway, and at last we clattered into Nickshitch, the most important town of Northern Montenegro. It was like a fair-sized Cornish village, with little stone houses and stone-walled gardens filled with sunflowers.

A charming old major came to the inn to do us the honour we had telegraphed for, and together we strolled about the streets. There is a pretty Greek church at one end on a formal mound, and behind the town runs a sheer fin of rock topped by an old castle where once had lived another man who "was a gooman all to hisself;" now it is a monastery, and one of the most picturesque in Montenegro.

We dined upon beautiful trout fresh from the river, and large green figs. Undressing, Jan found a louse in his shirt—that came from the dirty

bedroom at Shavnik evidently. He went to bed, but his troubles were not yet over; there was another foreign presence, a presence which raised large and itching lumps. He hunted without success for some time, but at last caught and exterminated an enormous bug. After which there was peace.

CHAPTER VII

TO CETTINJE

THE rain poured all night. At five o'clock they called us, telling us *not* to wake up as the motor would come later. At six they knocked again, saying—

"Get up quickly; the carriage is at the door."

No explanations.

We hurried so much that we left our best soap and our mascot, a beautiful little wooden chicken, behind for ever. The major was waiting in the bar room.

We were sorry to say good-bye, he was lonely, and we liked him; but we lost no time, as we were seven hours from Podgoritza and goodness knows how far from Cettinje.

The carriage and coachman were the same as yesterday's, but his expression was so lugubrious in the downpouring rain that he looked another man.

Just outside the village he picked up a friend and put her in the carriage. She was a velvet-coated old lady with a flat white face and two

bright birdlike brown eyes which she never took off us. Conversation was impossible, as she had only one tooth, round which her speech whistled unintelligibly, and she hiccuped loudly once in every half-hour. We were most uncomfortable. The hood was up, and a piece of tarpaulin was stretched from it across to the coachman's seat, blocking out the view except for the little we could see through a tiny triangle.

What with three humans, our bags, the old lady's bundle, and an enormous sponge cake, we were very cramped, and whenever we tried to move a stiffened knee her bright eye was on it, and she made some suitable remark to which we always had to answer with "Ne rasumem," "I don't understand," the while beaming at her to show we appreciated her efforts to put us at our ease.

The mist and rain entirely obscured the view. Now and then a tree showed as a thumb-mark on the grey. We little knew that we were passing through some of the most marvellous scenery in Europe.

The carriage settled down with a bump. Something wrong with the harness; string was produced, and it was made usable for the next half-hour. Carriages in Montenegro must have been designed in the days when builders thought more of voluptuous curves than of breaking strains, for we have

never been in one of them without many halts, during which the coachman endeavoured to tie the carriage together with string or wire to prevent it from coming in two.

We stopped at wayside inns and politely treated the old lady to coffee at a penny a cup to make up for our inappreciation of her conversational powers.

Women passed carrying the usual enormous bundles. Sometimes they were accompanied by husbands or brothers, who strolled along entirely unladen.

Jo busily sketched everybody she saw.

Passers-by demanded, "What is she doing?" and the onlookers answered—

"She is writing us;" for everything that is done with pencil on paper is to them writing.

One pretty young woman shook her fist, laughing—

"If I could write, I would write *you*," she said.

We were no longer in the Sanjak. Turkish influence had vanished, and we longed to see the famous Black Mountains of old Montenegro.

At Danilograd we marvelled at the enormous expensive bridge which seemed to lead to nothing but a couple of tiny villages. We missed the picturesque Turkish houses, built indeed only for to-day like their roads, but full of unexpected

corners and mysterious balconies. The Montenegrin houses were small and simple, four walls and a roof, like the drawing of a three-year-old child. The only thing lacking was the curly smoke coming from the chimney. Broad streets lined with these houses were unexhilarating in effect, and would have been more depressing except for the bright colours with which they were painted.

When the horses were replete after their midday meal we loaded up, adding to our numbers a taciturn man who sat on the box. We rolled on to Podgoritza, arriving at two o'clock in a steady downpour.

Podgoritza seemed unaware of our arrival. The streets were empty, and the Prefect's offices were tenanted only by the porter, a Turk, who remarked that the Prefect was taking his siesta, and seemed to think that was the end of it.

This was awful, after being Highnesses for a week, to be treated just like ordinary people, and perhaps to lose all chance of reaching Cettinje that night.

"Produce the Prefect," said Jo, stamping her foot, but the Turk only smiled and suggested a visit to the adjutant's office. Back to the carriage we went and drove to a place like a luggage depôt. No adjutant, nothing but giggling boys. Our coachman became restive and said his horses were

tired of the rain, so we deposited the old lady, substituted a man in American clothes who seemed sympathetic, and drove back to the Prefect's office with him. There we found a sleepy lieutenant who ordered coffee, while our American-speaking friend explained to him that we were very Great People, and that something ought immediately to be done for us. So the officer promised to get the Prefect as soon as possible, and we went to the hotel to drink more coffee with our baggy-trousered friend, who told us that he was one of a huge contingent of Montenegrins who had travelled from America to fight for the little country. "Say, who are your pals?" said a nasal voice, and the owner, a pleasant-looking man in a broad-shouldered mackintosh, took a seat at our table. He was also a Montenegrin, and had been mining in America for some years. More coffees were ordered. We confided to the new American Montenegrin that we did not like Podgoritza, and he tried to find excuses—the hour, the bad weather. The hotel-keeper came up and intimated in awestruck tones that the Prefect had just looked in with some friends.

Our appearance did not seem to impress the Prefect in the least, and small wonder. He owned to having received a telegram about us, but there was no motor-car available for that day, and he departed.

"The Prefect is only more unpleasant than Podgoritza," said Jo to the American in the mackintosh; but he deduced dyspepsia.

The Prefect, having been to his office and having seen the lieutenant, came back in five minutes, rather more suave in manner, and announced impressively that he was going to give us his own carriage.

But the rain, the giggling boys, the smiling Turk, and the sudden drop from royalty to insignificance had been rankling in Jo's mind. She sat back haughtily and remarked—

"But the Sirdar promised us a motor-car."

"I will go and see if it is possible," said the Prefect, and he dashed out into the rain. He returned full of apologies. All the motors were out, but he would send his carriage round immediately. "A delightful carriage," he added.

It arrived—a landau such as one would find at Waddingsgate-super-Mare, so free from scars that every Montenegrin turned to look at it.

The hotel-keepers, our American friends, and the Prefect and his captain stood pointing out its beauties, and we left them standing in the rain.

"I shall always put on side in this country," said Jo as she bit a large mouthful of cheese.

We pounded along, and the day slowly grew

darker. We passed an encampment, where the firelight thrown up on to the trees made a weird and jolly sight.

The hours passed by slowly. Suddenly (our coachman was probably dozing) we ran into something. It was a carriage, a square grey thing. Our coachman howled to it, and it started slowly forward up the steep hill. A bright light streamed from the windows and cut a radiant path in the foggy rains. Some one threw away a cigar-end. The wet road shining in the glare of our pink candles, and the lightning flashing intermittently so that the mountain-tops sprang out to disappear again in the darkness; we felt as if we were living in the introduction of a mystery story from the *Strand Magazine*.

At last in the misty rain we saw the aura of the lights of Cettinje. At last we wound slowly into wet streets, passed our mysterious companion without being able to see who was in it, and so to the hotel. Since the morning we had driven fourteen hours, and we were glad beyond measure to stretch and to find really comfortable beds.

The next day we got up early. There was much to do. We were to see the War Minister about Scutari, to present a letter of introduction to the English minister, and to inspect the town.

Nature has half filled a big crater with silt, and

the Montenegrins have half covered it with Cettinje.

It is a polychromatic village of little square houses, cheerfully dreary, and one does not see its uses except to be out of the way. The only building with any architectural beauty is the monastery where the old bishops reigned, and which must have many a queer tale to tell.

Asking for the Count de Salis, the English minister, we were directed to the diplomatic street, a collection of tiny houses grouped respectfully in front of the Palace, which itself was no larger than a Park Lane house laid edgeways, and with the paint peeling from its walls.

Over the front door of each little house a sort of barber's pole stuck outwards, striped with the national colours of the minister living within.

We noticed with pride and relief that the Count de Salis' pole was painted a reticent white. The sympathetic old lady who opened the door directed us to the Legation. There we found him inspecting the damages wreaked by the storm of overnight. The Legation was big and cold, and as the handsome fireplaces sent out by the British Board of Works were for anthracite only (and Montenegro produces only wood), the English minister preferred his warm cottage to the unheated Palace.

He wished us luck in our quest for Scutari, and

asked us to tea. We then hurried to an awful building where the governing of Montenegro was done—a concrete erection, presented to Montenegro by the British Government, and an exact imitation of one of our workhouses. Here we found the Minister of War, a gorgeously dressed little man with a pleasant grandfatherly gleam in his eye. He only spoke Serbian, but with him was an unshaven young man whose chest was covered with gold danglers, who immediately began to air his quite passable French. We explained what we had been doing and what we wanted to do. The War Minister had not heard of US from the Sirdar, who had been resting after his terrific ride, but said that they were to see each other that day. The little man beamed upon us, and said they always wished to do anything for the English, but he must first see the Sirdar.

"By the bye," he said, "I forgot to introduce you. This is Prince Peter, commander of the forces on the Adriatic coast." The young man arose and clicked his heels. We too got up. He shook hands with us solemnly, and Jo, unused to addressing Royalty, said, "Dobra Dan" (Good day).

Then we all sat down again, a further rendezvous was arranged for the evening, and we left, carrying away the impression that the War Minister and

we had bowed thirty times to each other before we got out of the door.

Out in the streets, as we were sketching, we saw a large smile under a Staff officer's cap bearing down upon us. It was the Sirdar, quite rested and looking twenty years younger. He was going to the War Minister's, and promised to arrange at once for our visit to Scutari. He looked at our cryptic drawings of road scavengers, threw up his hands and ejaculating "Kako"—strode out of our lives.

Tea in the little house with the discreet white pole was a great pleasure. Such tea we had not drunk since leaving England—butter, jam made by the old housekeeper, who pointed this out to us when she brought in a relay of hot water.

She was the daughter of a man who had been exiled from his village because he had taken a prominent part in a blood feud, and the old Gospodar had told him he would be healthier elsewhere. So they had emigrated as far as Serbia, where she had learnt to read and write.

A lady of good family but bad character suddenly decided to leave Montenegro, and fled to the shores of Cattaro, carrying with her a large number of State secrets. The Court was aghast. What was to be done?

A villain was needed. The father was decided

upon, and with the help of the lady's brothers she was kidnapped, carried back to Montenegro, and disappeared for ever. For which noble work he was permitted to return to his village.

The old lady had a supreme contempt for the Montenegrins who had not "travelled," but she looked upon the growing pomp of the Court with suspicion.

"Ah," she said, "those were fine days when the king was only the Gospodar, and there were none of these gold embroidered uniforms about, and the Queen and I used to slide down the Palace banisters together."

In those days the Royal family inhabited the top story only, while the ground floor was filled with wood for the winter. Just round the corner was the old pink palace, now used as a riding school. It had been the first place in Montenegro to possess a billiard-table. So, billiard-tables being rarer and more curious than kings—the palace had been called the BILLIADO.

The Queen, whatever agility she may have possessed once when navigating banisters, is now a sedate and domestic person, and doesn't hold with bluestockings, notwithstanding the "Higher Education" of some of her daughters.

The story goes that once when the King was away she inaugurated one of those thorough-paced

spring cleanings dear to most women's hearts; ordered the dining-room furniture into the street, and superintended the beating of it. Women hold a poor position in Montenegro, but one of character can carry all before her. A well-known English nurse was managing a hospital in Cettinje during the first Balkan War. One of her patients, though well connected as peasants often are in Montenegro, was a drunken old reprobate, and she told the authorities he must go. They demurred—his relations must not be offended. She insisted. They did nothing. One morning they found him, bed and all, in the middle of the street opposite the King's palace.

The authorities swallowed their lesson.

In the evening we walked over the stony hills with our host, and first had a glimpse of the real character of the country which had for so long kept the Turks at bay. One realized how much the people owed to the land for their boasted independence. Barren rock and scrub oak, no army could live here in sufficient numbers to subdue even a semi-warlike nation. Cettinje has been burned many a time by the Moslem, but starvation eventually drove him back to the fatter plains of the Sanjak, leaving a profitless victory behind him. Napoleon and Moscow over again.

More miners from America passed with their

showy machine-woven clothes, accompanied by their wives, who had evidently stayed behind in the old country. Otherwise they would have picked up new-fangled ideas about the rights of women, and would certainly have refused to shoulder the enormous American suit cases while their men ambled carelessly in front.

The next day we had a further interview with the War Minister, who introduced to us a man in corduroys, the only really round-faced person we had met in Montenegro. Part of his name was "Ob," so as we forgot the rest of it we called him Dr. Ob. He was the minister of drains, and such things. As nothing had been previously explained to him about us, he covered his mystification by hailing us jovially, after which he misconstrued everything we said.

He became very excited when we said we had brought 14,000 kilos of stores into Montenegro.

"But we have not got it yet," he ejaculated. We explained that it was for the English hospital, and he subsided, very disappointed.

Scutari was talked over again, and Dr. Ob promised to come and tell us that evening if Cettinje could supply a motor for the next morning.

More bows and smiles, and we left wondering. Montenegrins always promise even when they have no intention of performance—something like the

stage Irishman,—and we were surprised when Dr. Ob met us in the evening and said that the motor was arranged for next morning at eight.

We tea'd with the count once more. In the next house lived a gorgeous old gentleman, and we heard that he had been War Minister for forty odd years. After thirty years or so of office it was considered that he could better uphold the dignity of his position were he able to sign his name. So he had to learn.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LAKE OF SCUTARI

Dr. Ob, dressed in thick corduroys and an enormous pith helmet, arrived punctually with the motor, a Montenegrin Government motor. He had two companions, a girl simply dressed with coat and skirt which did not match, and cotton gloves whose burst finger ends were not darned, a Miss Petrovitch, and an officer. The coachwork—if one may dignify it by such a phrase—which was made from packing cases, had a thousand creaks and one abominable squeak, which made conversation impossible. The scenery was all grey rock and little scrubby trees; the road was magnificent and wound and twisted about the mountain side like a whip lash. Driving down these curves was no amateur's game, and we saw immediately that our chauffeur knew his job. We came over a ridge, and in the far distance, gleaming like the sun itself, a corner of the Lake of Scutari showed between two hill crests.

We ran into a fertile valley, passed through Rieka—where was the first Slavonic printing-press

—and up into the barren mountains once more. The peasants seem very industrious, every little pocket of earth is here carefully cultivated and banked almost in Arab fashion. The houses, too, were better, and rather Italian with painted balconies, but are built of porous stone and are damp in winter. The Rieka river ran along the road for some way, very green and covered with water-lily pods.

We passed a standing carriage, in which was a large man in Montenegrin clothes, and a little further on passed a man in a grey suit walking. Dr. Ob gesticulated wildly, and pulled up the motor to gather in a Frenchman—somebody in the French legation who was going to Scutari for a week end. He turned suddenly to Jan.

"Ce n'est pas une vie, monsieur," were the first words he uttered. He admired Miss Petrovitch very much, and told us in an undertone that she was a daughter of the governor of Scutari, niece of the King of Montenegro, and one of "les familles le plus chic."

We descended steeply to the Port, ten variously coloured houses and twenty-five variously clothed people. Miss Petrovitch, to our amazement, embraced a rather dirty old peasant, the doctor disappeared to find us luncheon, the Frenchman to wash, and we strolled about.

A voice hailed us, and turning round, we found our mackintoshed American of Pod. We took him to the inn and stood him a drink. Dr. Ob came in and we introduced; but Dr. Ob was sniffy and the American shy. His home was near by and he wished us to visit him, but there was no time.

We lunched in a bedroom plastered with pictures. Montenegrins seem to be ashamed of walls, and they adore royalty. In every room one finds portraits of the King of Montenegro, the queen, the princes, the King of Italy, his queen, the Tzar of Russia, the grand dukes and duchesses, the King of Serbia and his princes, and to cap all a sort of comprehensive tableau of all the male crowned heads of Europe—including Turkey—balanced by another commemorating all the queens of Europe—excluding Turkey—the spaces left between these august people are filled with family portraits, framed samplers, picture postcards or a German print showing the seven ages of man over a sort of step-ladder.

After lunch, loaded with grapes which Miss Petrovitch's peasant friend brought us, we trooped down to the steamer, which had been an old Turkish gun monitor and had been captured when the Montenegrins took Scutari.

The boat was crowded, and the Frenchman took refuge in the captain's cabin, which was crammed

with red pepper pods, and went to sleep. Jo began sketching at once. There were two full-blooded niggers aboard with us: they were descendants of the Ethiopian slaves of the harems; but the race is dying out, for the climate does not suit them. We steamed out into the lake, down the "kingly" canal, a shallow ditch in the mud. Magnificent mountains rush down on every side to the water, in which stunted willow trees with myriad roots—like mangroves—find an amphibious existence. We passed through their groves, hooting as though we were leaving Liverpool, and out into the eau-de-nil waters of the open lake.

In three hours we reached Plavnitza, a quay on the mud, where more passengers were waiting for our already crowded craft. There were officers, peasants, Turks, and soldiers clad in French firemen's uniforms. These uniforms, by the way, caused a lot of ill-feeling in Montenegro. The French sent them out in a spirit of pure economical charity, and had the Frenchmen not been, on the average, small, and the Montenegrin, contrariwise, large, perhaps the gift would have been received with a better grace; but the sight of these enormous men bursting in all places from their all too tight regimentals, was ludicrous, and the soldiers felt it keenly.

Two women came aboard, attached to officers,

and wearing long light blue coats, the ceremonious dress of all classes; one carried a wooden cradle strapped on her back, the woman with no cradle had in her arms a baby of some ten or eleven months, which she fed alternately on grapes and pomegranate seeds. With each was a large family including a beastly little boy who spat all over the decks, and one of the fathers, a stern gold-laced officer, carried a dogwhip with which to rule his offspring.

After a while we caught sight of Tarabosch, the famous mountain, and then the silhouette of the old Venetian fortress. From the water projected the funnels of yet another Turkish ship which had been sunk in the Balkan war, and we steamed into the amphibious trees on the mudflats of Scutari.

A boat with chairs in it came for us and we disembarked. The boat was rather like one of those that children make from paper, called cocked hats, only rather elongated, and the rowers pushed at the oars which hung from twisted osier loops. Governor Petrovitch met us on the quay. He was a fine-featured old man dressed in all the barbaric splendour of a full national costume, pale green long-skirted coat, red gold embroidered waistcoat, and baggy dark blue knee breeches with a huge amount of waste material in the seat. He kissed his daughter and greeted us genially. We clambered

into the usual dilapidated cab with the usual dilapidated horses, and off to the hotel.

The women on the roadside were clad in picturesque ever-varying costumes. There were narrow carts with high Indian-like wheels studded with large nails; there were Albanians in costumes of black and white, everything we had hoped or expected.

CHAPTER IX

SCUTARI

After a wash we went into the streets. It was the Orient, just as Eastern as Colombo or Port Said. The little fruit and jewellers' shops with square lanterns, the tailors sitting cross-legged in their windows, the strange medley of costumes—even the long lean dogs looked as if they had been kicked from the doors of a thousand mosques.

We left the shops for further explorations. Scutari has always been described as such a beautiful town. The adjective does not seem picturesque: yes, quaint, strange decidedly. One's second impression after the shops is this:—

Miles and miles of walls with great doors. The main streets branch out into thousands of impasses each ending in a locked door. There are hardly any connecting streets, for somebody's

walled garden is between. The Mahommedans hide in seclusion on one side of the town, while their hated enemies the Christians live on the other. Each house, Turk or Christian, has the same air of defiant privacy, the only difference being that the Turk's windows are blocked with painted lattice. The Mahommedan women's faces are covered with several thicknesses of chiffon, generally black, while the Christian peasant women walk about with an eye and a half peering from the shrouding folds of a cotton head shawl which they hold tightly under their noses.

With difficulty we found the English consul's house, as the Albanians speak no Serb and Montenegrins were not to be found at every street corner. At last we found it appropriately enough in the Rue du Consulat d'Angleterre. A gorgeous old butler resembling a wolf ushered us from the blank walled street into a beautiful square garden filled with flowering shrubs and creepers. Not to be outdone by the colours of the flowers, the butler was clad in a red waistcoat, embroidered with gold, a green cloth coat, blue baggy trousers, and a red fez with a tassel nearly a yard long, while a connoisseur's mouth would have watered at the sight of his antique silver watch-chain with its exquisitely worked hanging blobs.

The interior of the house gave an impression

of vast roominess. Wide stairs, a huge upper landing like a reception-room, a panelled drawing-room large enough to lose one's self in, ornamented by primitive frescoes on the walls above the panels.

The English consul was an old Albanian gentleman with delightful manners. For a long time he had been suffering from an illness which had started from a wound in the head, received during the siege of Scutari. After the inevitable coffee and cigarettes his son wandered out with us and showed us the interesting parts of the town. Out of a big doorway came two women in gorgeous clothes. They had been paying a morning call, and bade farewell to their hostess. Doubtless they were mother and daughter.

One was faded and beautiful; the younger was of the plump cream and roses variety with modestly downcast eyes. Both wore enormous white lace Mary Queen of Scots' veils, great baggy trousers made of stiff shiny black stuff, which was gathered into hard gold embroidered pipes which encased the ankles and upwards. These pipes were so stiff that they had to walk with straight knees and feet far apart. Their full cavalier coats were thickly covered with many kilometres of black braid sewn on in curly patterns, and the girl wore at least a hundred golden coins hung in semicircles on her chest.

They left the third woman at the door and

walked back a few steps down the road, then turned, and laying hand on breast, bowed ceremoniously, first the mother, then the daughter, who never lifted her eyes; another twenty steps and again the same performance; still once more, after which they slowly waddled round the corner. Suma told us they wore the costume of the *haute bourgeoisie*, and probably the girl had been taken to see her future mother-in-law.

The next vision that met our eyes was the doctor in his best clothes, frock-coat, white spats, gloves, and a minute pork-pie cap perched on the top of his spherical countenance.

"In Scutari it is necessary that I should be *en tenue*," was his explanation.

Suma parted with us, promising to take us to the bazaar the next day, and we spent the afternoon sketching and avoiding a dumb idiot who tried to amuse us by standing on his head in front of whatever object we chose to sketch, and at intervals thrust into our hands a letter which he thought was a money producing talisman. It said in English, "Kick this chap if he bothers you."

There are other traces of the English soldiery here. Little children with outstretched hands flock round, saying in coaxing tones "Garn," or "Git away you," under the impression that they are saying "please."

At a street corner we saw a professional beggar,

a shattered man of drooping misery, his rags vieing with the colour of the road. Jo began to sketch, but he promptly sat up, twirled his long moustaches, and from a worm became a lion. One may be a beggar in Albania, but as long as one has moustaches one is at least a man.

The bazaar next day filled our wildest dreams. Queerly clad peasants of all tribes came down from the mountains bearing rugs, rubbish, white cloths, cheese, honey, poultry, pigs, and they sat on the ground behind their wares in the blazing heat, while all the rest of Northern Albania came to purchase. The little shops set out their pottery, silver-ware and brightly striped veils. Jo lifted up a woman's leather belt covered with silver, thinking how nice it would look on a modern skirt; but she dropped it with a crash, for the leather was a quarter of an inch thick, and the silver equally weighty.

Veiled women bargained and chaffered with the rest, some dressed in white with black chiffon covering their faces, and others still more bizarre, wore flowered chiffon, one large flower perhaps covering the area of one cheek and nose.

More fanatic in religion than their men, they objected to being sketched, crouching to the ground and covering themselves completely with draperies, so we had to desist.

There can be no arguments about beauty in these lands. It goes by "volume."

Put the ladies on the scales, and in case of a tie, measure them round the hips.

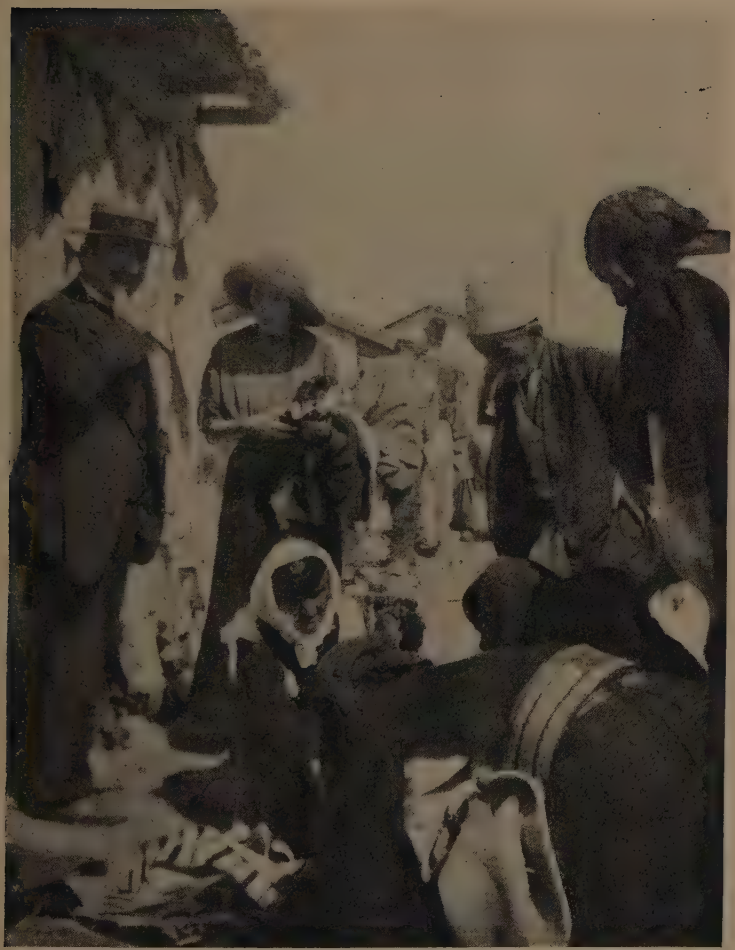
Vendors pressed gold-embroidered zouaves, antique arms and filigree silver-ware upon us; but we ever looked elsewhere, and Jo suddenly pounced on a handkerchief, or rather a conglomeration of bits sewn together, each being a remnant of brilliant coloured patterned stuff.

"But that has no value," said Suma, smiling.

"Never mind, I shall wear it as a hat," said Jo; and Suma, somewhat perplexed, lowered his dignity and bargained for it.

We next saw a brilliantly striped rug hanging on the wall behind an old woman, red, green, yellow, black and white, just what we wanted. She consented to take thirteen silver cronen for it, but no Montenegrin paper. She explained she was poor. She had brought up the sheep, spun and dyed the wool, and had woven the beautiful thing, and now she wanted silver because outside Scutari, in which the Montenegrins forced acceptance of their notes by corporal punishment, paper was worth nothing. To get the silver we went into a general store and sold a sovereign.

While we were waiting for the money-changer, two Miridite women came in. They had short



JO AND MR. SUMA IN THE SCUTARI BAZAAR.

hair dyed black, white coarse linen chemises with large sleeves, embroidered zouaves, white skirts with front and back aprons lavishly embroidered, striped trousers, and stockings knitted on great diagonal patterns.

One of them told Suma that their village was in possession of Essad Pacha, that all their husbands had fled, and were still fighting in the hills.

Suma, for a joke, asked her what she thought of Jo. Passing her eyes over Jo's uninflated frame, she hesitated, but was urged to speak the truth.

"I think she is forty," she remarked; and then somehow Jo was not quite pleased.

The midday heat being overwhelming we took a cab and drove back along two kilometres of dusty road. A veiled woman stopped the coachman, asking him to give her tired little girl a lift. Jehu refused, through awe of us; but we insisted on taking her, and begged the woman to come in too. Jo held out her hands, but the woman shrank back horrified, though obviously worn out with the heat.

"That is a pity," laughed Suma. "I hoped she would do it. It would have been a new experience for me."

Jo confided to him her burning desire to enter a harem, but as he had no Mahommedan friends he thought the possibility remote.

Two more bourgeois women passed. Jan photographed them, but not before they hid their faces with umbrellas. Even the Christian men are intensely jealous, and their women have some Turkish ideals. We spent the afternoon sketching outside a barber's shop, coffee being brought to us on a hanging tray with a little fire on it to keep the coffee warm. Opposite was a shop which combined the trades of blacksmith and fishmonger. It seemed the strangest mixture.

We dined with the Frenchman. He was a queer fellow, seeming only interested in economies, his digestion and his old age; and he discussed the possible places where an old man might live in comfort. Egypt, he dismissed: too hot, and an old man does not want to travel. The Greek islands had earthquakes. Corfu, he had heard, was depressing; while in the Canaries there was sometimes a wind and one might catch cold. We suggested "heaven," and he looked hurt. He had been in Scutari in December. He told us that after dark it was impossible to walk down the great main street, which divides Christian from Turk, without carrying a lighted lantern to signal that you were not on nefarious intent, or you might be shot.

Mr. Suma came along the next day in good time and gave Jan a letter for the Count de Salis. We

CHRISTIAN WOMEN HIDING FROM THE PHOTOGRAPHER.

SCUTARI—BAZAAR AND OLD VENETIAN FORTRESS.

bade him a most cordial farewell, assuring him prophetically that we should revisit Scutari—little did we dream in what circumstances,—and he said we would then see the "Maison Pigit," a show castle which he had, in vain, urged us to visit. Paget was an Englishman who seems to have spent ten or twelve years dreaming away life in Scutari, and collecting ancient weapons. With the outbreak of the South African war he disappeared. He was then heard of fighting for the Turk against the Italian, and later for the Turk against the Balkan alliance. He has never returned.

With Dr. Ob we drove to the quay, on the road passing an old woman staggering along beneath the weight of a complete iron and brass bedstead.

As we got out of our carriage we noticed a rabble of Turks hurrying towards us. In its midst was a brougham with windows tight shut and veiled, from which we guessed that some light of the harem was to be a fellow passenger. The carriage halted, and whatever was within was hustled from the farthest door and in the midst of the dense mob of men hurried down the quay. The side of the steamer was crowded with craft, so we passed beneath the stern to embark on the far side, to find that the Turkish lady and her escort had passed beneath the bows for a similar purpose. We caused a flutter, the beauty was

hastily lifted on board like a bale of goods, and we caught a glimpse of magnificent pink brocaded trousers and jewelled shoes beneath her red orange covering. Two women—one a Christian—followed, and when she was seated, bent over her as a sort of screen to hide even her clothes from the gaze of the naughty infidel.

Governor Petrovitch came down to the quay to bid us good-bye. With him came his daughter, who was returning with us. She had nothing interesting to say about Scutari. The Frenchman had brought with him a cook whom he had engaged to look after his digestion.

We found comfortable seats on a long box with a bale as a back rest, and the governor sent two chairs for the ladies. As we steamed away we pondered on the problem of Scutari.

There are in all, say, 300,000 Serbs, a high estimate, in all Montenegro. The population of the Sanjak and its cities, Plevlie, Ipek, Berane, and Jakovitza, are of course largely Mussulman or Albanian, and already the balance of people in the little mountain kingdom is wavering. If Montenegro adds to herself Scutari, a town in which the Serb population is practically "nil," the scales swing over heavily against the ruling classes, and either one will see Montenegro absorb Scutari, to be in turn absorbed by Scutari itself; or we shall see

DISEMBARKATION OF A TURKISH BRIDE.

GOVERNOR PETROVITCH AND HIS DAUGHTER IN THEIR STATE BARGE.

the crimes of Austro-Hungary repeated upon a smaller scale, and Montenegro will be some day condemned before a tribunal of Europe for continued injustice to the people entrusted to her. The Albanians loathe the Serb even more than they hate the Turk, and at present, in spite of the fact that they are on their best manners, the Montenegrin police and soldiery have the appearance of a debt collector in the house of one who has backed a friend's bill.

An Albanian noble said to Jan, "We are quiet now: the Powers have no time to waste upon us, and we are not going to revolt and let ourselves be murdered without redress. But, if after the war things are not righted, monsieur, there will be a revolution every day."

We saw a pelican, and of course some one had to try and kill it; but luckily the criminal was an average shot only. The pelican flew off flapping its broad white wings. The Frenchman told us that the Turkish lady round the corner is a gipsy bride to be. A light dawned upon us. The bed, these boxes we were sitting upon: she was taking her furniture with her. Jan peered round at her. She was sitting on a low stool, and the two screens were standing at duty. They had chosen the most secluded spot in the boat, which was next to the boilers. The day itself was very hot, and the

atmosphere within the poor bride's thick coverings must have been awful, though when nobody was looking she was allowed to raise for a second the many thicknesses of black chiffon which shrouded her face, and to gasp a few chestfulls of fresh air.

Dr. Ob suddenly produced a large sheep's head which he dissected with medical knowledge. He gouged out an eye which he offered to Jo; upon her refusing the succulent morsel he gave a sigh of relief and wolfed it himself. One of the men on board had a fiddle, and played us across the lake. Some one said, "Give us the Merry Widow."

He shook his head.

"Come on," said his tempter, "there's no one here. Give it us." At last, looking at Miss Petrovitch and us, the musician timidly started the music, for the "Merry Widow" is "straffed" in Montenegro as one of the characters is a caricature of Prince Danilo, hence everybody plays it with gusto in private.

We came again to Plavnitza. A huge crowd of Turks were waiting for us; one wild befezzed ruffian had a concertina and was capering to his own strains.

We were suddenly disturbed, the box was wrested away, the bundles also, the bed was carried off, also a tin dish too small for a bath, too big for a basin, and a tin watering pot—the

bride's trousseau. The bride was seized by two men, her brothers we were told, and carried up the stairs to a waiting brougham, the trousseau was piled upon a bullock cart, and shouting and singing and dancing the *cortège* moved out of sight.

At Virbazar the steamer could not come to the quay, so the authorities ran a five-inch rounded tree trunk from the boat to the mud. Many dared the perilous crossing, and one nearly fell into the water. Dr. Ob was furious, and at last a plank was substituted. Then we found that the only way off the mud was by clambering round a corner of wall on some shaky stepping stones. Dr. Ob fumed, his little round face grew rounder, his moustache went up and down, he threatened everybody with instant execution, like the Red Queen in "Alice." Then he found that no motor was awaiting us. He rushed to the telephone while we had a belated lunch. No motors; one was out taking the Serbian officers for a joy-ride; Prince Peter had taken the other to Antivari. Montenegro seemed to have no more. We soothed ourselves with "American" grapes. This grape tastes not unlike strawberries and cream, but not having the same sentimental associations, does not come off quite as well. We heard a motor coming. Dr. Ob ran out to intercept it. It was crammed.

Then the telephone boy brought a message that Prince Peter's motor would not return till to-morrow.

Miss Petrovitch wrung her hands.

"We cannot stay here the night," she said.

"Are the bugs awful?" we asked.

"It's not the bugs, it's those dreadful women," she answered. "We shall all be murdered in our beds."

Now the women appeared to us most inoffensive.

Dr. Ob was purple with rage. He stamped his foot.

"But I am a minister," he kept repeating crescendo, till he shouted to the villagers, "But I am a minister."

It is impossible to take Montenegro seriously. Situations occur at every corner which remind one irresistibly of "the Rose and the Ring," and we wondered what would happen next. There were other belated passengers who had hoped for conveyance, and the Frenchman's carriage had not turned up. Dr. Ob at last decided to commandeer a cocked hat boat rowed by four women with which to navigate the river to Rieka, and thence by carriage to Cettinje if carriages came. It was six p.m., we might reach Rieka by ten.

We rowed out through the half-sunken trees. At the end of a spit of land was a man gnawing a

piece of raw beef. We shouted to him to ask what he was doing; and he answered that he was curing his malaria. The two women in the bow were very pretty, one was a mere child.

There were wisps of sunset cloud in the sky, and soon night came quite down.

As it grew dark all sense of motion disappeared. The boat shrugged uneasily with the movement of the oars, the rowlocks made of loops of twisted osier creaked, but one could not perceive that one was going forwards. The hills lost their solidity, becoming mere holes in the grey blue of the sky, a bright planet made a light smudge on the ruffled water in which the stars could not reflect. As we crept forwards into the river and the mountains closed in, the water became more calm, and the stars came out one by one beneath us, while in the ripple of our wake the image of the planet ran up continuously in strings of little golden balls like a juggling trick.

The Frenchman turned his head and made a noise like the rowlocks. "Il faut chanter quand même," he explained, "pour encourager les autres." Jo then started "Frère Jacques." Jan and Dr. Ob took it up till the Frenchman burst in with an entirely different time and key. Then one of the oar girls began a queer little melody on four notes only, and all the four women joined, one end of the boat

answering the other. They sang through their noses, and high up in the falsetto. By shutting one's eyes one could imagine a great ox waggon drawn uphill by four bullocks and one of the wheels ungreased. Yet it was not unpleasing, this queer shrill, recurrent rhythm, the monotonous creak and splash of the oars, the mystery of feeling one's way in the blue gloom, through reed and water-lily beds, up this cliff-bound river, and far away the faint twitter—also recurrent and monotonous—of some nightjar. . . .

The night grew bitterly cold on the water. One of our passengers, a little Russian dressmaker, had malaria and shivered with ague. Jo gave her her cloak. The Frenchman's cook was unsuitably dressed, for she had on but a thin chiffon blouse. We ourselves had summer clothes, and we were all mightily glad to see the glare of Rieka in the sky.

Our luck be praised, there were two old carriages with older horses, and another for the Frenchman. We supped moderately at a restaurant kept by an Austrian, and still shivering scrambled into the carriages. We had no lights, but the road was visible by the stars.

We went up and up, up the same road down which we had come three days before. Below one could see strange planes of different darknesses, but not any shape, and soon one was too aware of

physical discomfort to notice the night. Besides, one had had enough of night. Miss Petrovitch told the boy to hurry up the horses; he beat them; she then rebuked him for beating them. After a while the boy grew tired of her contradictory orders, and lying down on the box fell fast asleep. The poor old horses plodded along. To right and left were immense precipices, but nobody seemed to care.

We reached Cettinje about two a.m., found the hotel open, and a room ready for us, and in spite of our frozen limbs were soon asleep.

CHAPTER X

THE HIGHWAY OF MONTENEGRO

We went next day to see the doctor, who was late, so we strolled out to the market. They were selling grapes and figs, fresh walnuts, and lots of little dried fish, strung on to rings of willow, from the lake of Scutari. The scene, with the men in their costumes of red and blue, the women all respectably dressed in long embroidered coats of pale blue or white, and the village idiot, a man prancing about dressed in nothing but a woman's overall, was very gay. We caught the doctor later. He was talking with a Mrs. G——, an Englishwoman, from the hospital at Podgoritza: she was trying to hustle him as one hustles the butcher who has belated the meat. The doctor had let up his efforts since his orgy of respectability in Scutari, and his beard and whiskers were enjoying a half-inch holiday from the razor. With him was a Slav-Hungarian, who recommended us to go home by Gussigne, Plav and Ipek, the best scenery in all Montenegro he said; he himself had just returned from Scutari, whence

he had advanced with a Montenegrin army halfway across Albania. At each village the natives had fled, burying their corn and driving off their cattle, leaving the villages deserted, and the army, starving, had at last been forced to retire. Dr. Ob promised us a motor by four, but added that they had no oil and very little benzine. Then growing more confidential, he took us by the buttonholes and asked us to use our best influence with the Count de Salis, and request him to tell the Admiralty to allow petrol to be brought up from Salonika, where the British had laid an embargo upon it. He promised pathetically that *all* the petrol would be brought up overland.

Intensely amused by the doctor's idea of our importance, we solemnly delivered his message to the Count.

We went to the Serbian Minister, a charming man with a freebooter's face, for our passports, and then back to Dr. Ob. The motor was going off at 6.30 he said. We cheered internally, for we were getting tired of Cettinje, which reminded us of a watchmaker's wife with her best silk dress on. On our way downstairs we called in to thank the Minister of War for our jolly trip; and he wished us "Bon voyage."

We got en route almost up to time, with us was Mrs. G——, who was also going back as far as

Podgoritza. She was storekeeper and accountant for the Wounded Allies, and ever had a hard and troublesome task between what she needed and what she could get from the Sanitary Department. She took the front seat with Jo, and inside Jan found a French sailor of the wireless telegraphy, who had had typhoid fever, but was now going back to work. As we rattled down the curves and along the edge of the darkening chasms of the mountain side, he summed up with the brevity of a " rapin."

" Dans la journée ici, vous savez, il y'a de quoi faire des clichés."

We stopped at Rieka for water, and then on once more. In the glare of our headlights, little clumps of soldiers, with donkeys loaded with the new uniforms, loomed suddenly out of the darkness. Once a donkey took fright and bolted back, and the soldier in charge yelled and pointed his rifle at us. If we had moved he would have shot without compunction. Later the men had bivouacked, and all along the rest of the road we passed little fires of fresh brushwood, the sparks pouring up like fountains into the night, round which the soldiers and drivers were sitting and singing their weird songs.

At Podgoritza we found Dr. Lilias Hamilton at supper with her staff. She has had rather a hard time. The hospital was intended for Ipek, but

for some reason, although there were wounded in the town, the Montenegrins decided to move it to Podgoritza, where there were none. After a difficult journey across the mountains they settled down, but could never get sufficient transport from the Government to bring their stores over, except in small quantities. They started to work, but as there were few soldiers to treat, Dr. Lilias, being a lady, interested herself in the Turkish female population, a thing which the Montenegrins thought a criminal waste of time, and tried to stop.

We got a bedroom in the hotel, and tired out, tried to sleep; but the occupants of the café began a set of howling songs, very unmusical, and kept us awake till past twelve. We have never heard this kind of singing anywhere else.

Next day we crossed the river and explored the quaint and beautiful streets of the Turkish quarter. The people are equally offensive on both sides of the town; however, Podgoritza seems to be the Whitechapel of Montenegro—and we finally had to take refuge in the sheds of the French wireless telegraphy. The commandant at the motor depôt again treated us rudely, but the Prefect was nice, this time. He promised us a carriage on the morrow if no motor were forthcoming.

After supper the people began the awful howling songs; also there was a wild orchestra which had

one clarinet for melody and about ten deep bass trumpets for accompaniment.

Next morning no carriage came, so off to the Prefect. He promised one "odmah," which being translated is "at once," but means really within "eight or nine hours." We waited. Nine a.m. passed. Ten a.m. went by. A small boy sneaked up and tried to sell some contraband tobacco; but Jan had just bought "State." An angry Turkish gentleman came and said that his horses had been requisitioned to take us to Andrievitza, and that we weren't going to get them till one o'clock, because he was using them. We returned to the Prefect, not to complain—oh no—but to ask him to telegraph to Andrievitza that we were coming. He was naturally surprised to see us again, and explanations followed. A very humbled and much better tempered Turk came to the café to say that the horses would be with us "odmah."

A drizzle had been falling all the morning; at last the carriage came. Our driver was a wretched half-starved, high-cheeked Moslem in rags, whose trousers were only made draught proof by his sitting on the holes. He tried to squeeze another passenger upon us; but we were wiser, and were just not able to understand what he was saying. Our Turk's method of driving was to tie the reins to the carriage rail, flourishing a whip and shouting

with vigour; every ten minutes he glanced uneasily backwards to see that nothing had broken loose or come away.

The valley we entered had been very deep, but at some period had been half filled by a deposit of sand and pebble which had hardened into a crumbling rock. We were driving over the gravelly shelf, above our head rose walls of limestone, and deep below was the river which had eaten the softer agglomerate into a hundred fantastic caverns. All along the road we passed groups of tramping volunteers fresh from America with store clothes and suitcases; the sensible were also festooned with boots. It was pretty cold sitting in the carriage, and it grew colder as we mounted.

At last we halted to rest the horses at a café. The influence of "Pod" was heavy still. A group of grumpy people were sitting around a fire built in the middle of the floor; they did not greet us—which is unusual in Montenegro—but continued the favourite Serb recreation of spitting. In the centre of them was an old man on a chair, also expectorating, and by his side one older and scraggier, his waistcoat covered with snuff and medals, palpitated in a state of senile decay, holding in a withered hand a palmfull of snuff which he had forgotten to inhale. There were a lot of women saying nothing and

spitting. A sour, hard-faced woman admitted that there was coffee.

Jo, trying to cheer things up a bit, said brightly—

"Is it far to Andrievitza?"

A woman mumbled, "Far, bogami."

Jo again: "It is cold on the road."

A long silence, broken with the sound of spitting, followed. At last a woman in the darkest corner murmured—

"Cold, bogami."

It was like the opening of a Maeterlinckian play, but we gave it up, sipped our coffee, and when we had finished, fled outside into the cold which, after all, was warmer than these people's welcome. Outside we met a young man who spoke German, and as he wanted to show off, he stopped to converse. We were joined by an older man who claimed to be his father. The father was really a jolly old boy. He said his son was a puny weakling, but as for himself he never had had a doctor in his life. So Jan tried his mettle with a cigar. An officer, a filthy old peasant in the remains of a battered uniform, joined the group, but he was not charming; however, Jan offered him a cigarette. The old yokel rushed on his fate. He said—

"Cigarettes are all very well; but I would rather have one of those you gave to the other fellow."

The road wound on and up in the usual way, rain came down at intervals, and it grew colder and colder. At last we extracted all our spare clothes from the knapsack and put them on. We reached the top of the pass and began to rattle down the descent on the further side, and we kept our spirits up, in the growing gloom, by singing choruses: "The old Swanee river" and "Uncle Ned."

We pulled up at dusk at a dismal hovel, on piles, with rickety wooden stairs leading to a dimly lighted balcony over which fell deep wooden eaves.

"Is this Jabooka?" we asked, for we had been told to alight at Jabooka.

"No," said the driver; "we cannot reach Jabooka to-night. But here are fine beds, fine, fine, fine!"

We climbed in. The rooms were whitewashed and looked all right, but there was a funny smell. We shall know what it means a second time. There was a crowd of American Montenegrin volunteers in the kitchen. One gay fellow was in a bright green dressing-gown like overcoat: he said that his wife —a hard-featured woman who looked as if nobody loved her—had brought his saddle horse. We got some hard-boiled eggs and maize bread. Maize bread is always a little gritty, for it has in its substance no binding material, but when it is well cooked and has plenty of crust is quite eatable.

French cooking is far away, however, and the bread is usually a sort of soggy, half-baked flabby paste, most unpalatable and most indigestible. Here was the worst bread we yet had found.

They took us down a dark passage, in which huge lumps of raw meat hanging from the walls struck one's hand with a chill, flabby caress as one passed. In our room, four benches were arranged into a pair of widish couches; mattresses were given us and coarse hand-woven rugs. We were then left. But we could not sleep; somehow lice were in one's mind, and at last Jan awoke and lit the tiny oil lamp. He immediately slew a bug; then another; then a whopper; then one escaped; then Jo got one. In desperation we got up, smeared ourselves with paraffin, and lay down again in a dismal distressed doze till morning.

Our driver was a dilatory dog: we had said that we would leave at five a.m., and at six he was washing his teeth in the little stream which acted as the village sewer. As we were waiting our green-coated friend got away on his saddle horse, with his wife walking at its tail; the other Americans climbed into a great three-horse waggon, dragged their suit-cases after them, and off they went. We left nearer seven than six. The air was chilly, and though there were bits of blue in the sky, the hills were floating in mist, and there

was a sharp shower. There were more groups of Americans trudging along, and also a fair number of peasants, the women, as usual, dignified and beautiful. Very hungry we at last came to Jabooka. A jolly woman—we were getting away from "Pod"—welcomed us and dragged us into the kitchen. She asked Jo many questions, one being, "What relation is he to you, that man with whom you travel?" The fire on the floor was nearly out, but she rained sticks on to it, blew up the great central log, which is the backbone, into a blaze, and soon the smoke was pouring into our eyes and filtering up amongst the hams in the roof. We were drinking a splendid café au lait when an old woman peered in at the door.

"Very beautiful Jabooka," she said.

We agreed heartily.

"Not dear either," she said.

We expressed surprise.

"You can buy cheap," she went on.

We regretted that we did not wish to.

"But you must eat to live," she protested.

We intimated that this was of the nature of a truism, but failed to see the connection.

"But look at them," she expostulated, holding out a large basket of apples; and we suddenly remembered that "Jabooka" means also apples, and realized that she was not a land agent.

Then on once more. In the deep valleys were large modern sawmills, but the houses were ever poor, and the windows grew smaller and smaller and were without glass. At the junction of the Kolashin road, from the north, we picked up a jolly Montenegrin with a big dog. He was a driver by profession, and he hurried our lethargic progress a little. Then the front spring broke. It was mended with wire and a piece of tree; when we started again the reins snapped.

We halted once more at a café filled with Americans; some had only left their native land six months agone, yet to the peasant they were all "Americans." Some of them seemed very dissatisfied with the reception which they had received, and we don't wonder. "In Ipek I coulden get my room," said one, "tho' I 'ad wired for 't, 'cause one o' them 'airy popes [Greek priests] 'ad come wid 'is fambly. I 'ad to sleep like a 'og, you fellers, jess like a 'og." We had been under the impression that burning patriotism had called all these men back to their country, but one sturdy fellow disabused us.

"No, you fellers," he said, "there weren't no work for us in 'Murrica. Mos' o' the places 'ad closed down ter a shift or two at the mos' per wik. And fer fellers wats used to livin' purty well there weren't enough ter pay board alone. We gotter

come or we'd a starved." Of course this was not true of many.

On again, rain and sun alternating, but still we were cold, feet especially.

These mountains, these continual groups of slouching, slouch-hatted "Americans," these little weathered log cabins, falling streams, and pine trees reminded one of some tale of Bret Harte, and one found one's self expecting the sudden appearance of Broncho Billy or Jack Hamlin mounted upon a fiery mustang. But we cleared the top of the pass without meeting either, and started on our last long downhill to Andrievitza. Cheered by the rapidity of our motion the two ruffians on the box started a howling Podgoritzian kind of melody, exceedingly discordant. The driver, careless that one of our springs was but wired tree, and that wheels in Montenegro are easily decomposed, flogged his horses unmercifully, rattling along the extreme edge of one hundred foot precipices. We stopped at a café for the driver to get coffee; rattled on again, stopped to inquire the price of hay; more rattle; stopped for the driver to say, "How de doo" to a pal; more rattle; stopped to ask a man if his dog has had puppies yet. . . . But we protested.

Andrievitza was the prettiest village we had yet

seen in Montenegro, and was full of more "Americans." In the street a small boy urged us to go to "Radoikovitches," but we went to the hotel. The hotel was full, because a Pasha from Scutari had arrived with his three wives, and all their families. So we permitted the little yellow-haired urchin to lead us to "Radoikovitches." A woman received us, without gusto, till she learned that Jo was Jan's wife, when she cheered up. A charming old officer stood rakia all round in our honour. The mayor came in to greet us, and we felt that at last Pod had been pushed behind for ever.

The mayor was a pleasant fellow, speaking French, and he confided in us that he was suffering from a "maladie d'estomac." When we thought we had sympathized enough, we asked him how far it was, and could we have horses to go to Petch. He answered that it was two days, or rather one and a half, and that the horses would await us at twelve on the following day. We went to bed early to make up for last night, but Jan, having felt rather tickly all day, hunted the corners of his shirt and found—dare we mention it—a louse, souvenir de Liéva Riéka.

As we were breakfasting next day our driver, who had been most unpleasant the whole time, sidled up and asked Jan to sign a paper. While Jan was doing so the driver burst into a volley of

explanations. We thought that he was asking for a tip, but made out that he had lost (or gambled) the ten kronen which his employer had given to him for expenses. We had intended to give him no tip, for on the yesterday he had refused to carry our bags, but this made us waver. We asked Mr. Rad, etc., what we should do.

"Sign his paper," he answered gruffly, "and kick him out; he's only a dirty Turk anyhow."

The mayor sent our horses round early; but we stuck to our decision to start in the afternoon, and ordered lunch at twelve. There was a huge crowd gathered in front of the inn, and we saw that the Pasha and his harem were off. One wife wore a blue furniture cover over her, one a green, and one a brown, so that he might know them apart from the outside, for they all had heavy black veils before their faces. The Pasha himself seemed rather a decent fellow, and had much of the air of a curate conducting a school feast. Four children were thrust into two baskets which were slung on each side of one small horse, and various furniture, including a small bath (or large basin), was strapped on to others, and the Pasha followed by his wives set off walking, the Pasha occasionally throwing a graceful remark behind him.

The mayor lunched with us, and for a man who has, as he says, anæmia of the stomach, chronic

dysentery, and inflammation of the intestines, he ate most freely, and if such is his daily habit, he deserved all he had got.

Our guide was the most picturesque we have yet had. He was an Albanian with a shaven poll save for a tuft by which the angels will one day lift him to heaven, small white cap like a saucer, over which was wound a twisted dirty white scarf, short white coat heavily embroidered with black braid, tight trousers, also heavily embroidered, but the waistband only pulled up to where the buttock begins to slide away—we wondered continuously why they never fell off—and the long space between coat and trousers filled with tightly wound red and orange belt. He called himself Ramases, or some such name. Our saddles were pretty good, the stirrups like shovels, the horses the best (barring at the Front) we had had since Prepolji.

We rode over a creaky bridge, Jan's horse refusing, so he went through the river, and out into the new road which is being made to Ipek. Men and women, almost all in Albanian costumes, were scraping, digging, drilling and blasting; some of the women wore a costume we had not yet seen, very short cotton skirt above the knees, and long, embroidered leggings. We passed this high-road "in posse" and, the little horses stepping along, presently caught up a trail of donkeys, the

proprietor of which, a friend of Ramases, had a face like a post-impressionist sculpture.

We passed the donkeys and came to the usual sort of café, rough log hut, fire on floor—but one of the women therein gave Jo her only apple—decidedly we were away from Pod.

On again along river valleys. Jan's saddle had a knob in the seat that began to insinuate. On every hill were cut maize patches, the red stubble in the sunset looking like fields of blood.

In the dusk we came to Velika, a wooden witchlike village, where we were to stay the night, and where, as we had expected, the Pasha, ten minutes ahead of us, had commandeered all the accommodation. The captain, however, was very good, and gave us a policeman to find lodgings for us. By this time it was dark. He led us into a pitch black lane where the mud came over our boots, then we clambered up a loose earth cliff and stood looking into a room whose only light was from a small fire, as usual on the floor. Over the fire was a large pot, and a meagre-faced woman was stirring the brew. Behind her a small baby in a red and white striped blanket was pushed up to its armpits through a hole on four legs, where it hung. In a dark corner a small boy was worrying a black cat.

"Can you give these English a bed?" demanded the policeman.

The woman shook her head sadly. "Mozhe," she said, which means "It is possible."

After supper, Bovril and cheese omelette, we went out to seek the café. We trudged back through the mud and stumbled into a house full of lattice work, like a Chinese store. Startled we tried another. This time we came into a stable, but there was a ladder leading upwards, and at the top a lighted room, so we decided to explore. We climbed up and came into a large loft in which six long legged, heavily bearded Albanians were squatting about a fire; a gipsy woman with wild tousled hair and hanging breasts was in the corner of the hearth, and was telling some long monotonous tale. An Albanian, who spoke Serb, told us to come in and have coffee. It was like the illustration of some tale from the Arabian Nights. After a while we climbed out again into the night, and went home. Ramases hung about shyly, and the woman explained that he had nowhere to sleep; so we arranged that she should house him also.

Even as we poked our noses out of the door there was a promise of a fine day. Below us we could see the Pasha up and superintending the packing of his family and furniture. We celebrated by

opening our last tin of jam, which we had carried carefully all the way, waiting for an occasion. We left the remains of the jam for the small family, and as we were mounting we saw their faces smeared and streaked with "First Quality Damson." We started the climb almost at once. The early morning smoke filtering through the slats made an outer cone, of faint blue, above the black roof of every hut and cottage; here and there were traces of roadmaking, groups of Albanian workmen on stretches of levelled earth which our trail crossed at irregular intervals. Presently we entered the clouds, and were wrapped about with a thin mist faintly smelling of smoke. After a while we climbed above them, and looking down could see the clouds mottling all the landscape, and through holes little patches of sunlit field or wood peering through like the eyes of a Turkish woman through her yashmak.

Our horses panted and sweated up the long and arduous slope for two mortal hours, up and ever up; but all things come to an end, and at last we reached the top. We sat down to rest our weary animals and, lo! by us passed long strings of mules and ponies bearing the very benzine about which so much fuss had been made in Cettinje. Alas for our reputations as miracle workers! Had this blessed stuff only come a week later we should

even have passed in Montenegro as first cousins of the king at least; but this was a little too prompt.

There was landscape enough here for any budding Turners, but we two had still eight hours to go and not money enough to loiter. On the higher peaks of the mountains there was already a fresh powdering of snow; in the valleys the clouds had almost cleared away, leaving a thin film of moisture which made shadows of pure ultramarine beneath the trees. Your modern commercial grinder cannot sell you this colour, it needs some of that pure jewel powder which old Swan kept in a bottle for use on his masterpiece, but found never a subject noble enough. Some of that stuff prepared from the receipt of old Cennino Cennini which ends "this is a work, fine and delicate, suitable for the hands of young maidens, but beware of old women." Pure Lapis Lazuli.

But it became difficult even for us to admire landscape, for breakfast had disappeared within us, and lunch seemed far away, so once more recourse to the "compressed luncheon." There are three stages in the taste of the "Tabloid." Stage one, when it smacks of glue; stage two, when it has a flavour of inferior beef tea, say 11.30 a.m.; stage three, when it resembles nothing but the gravy of the most delicious beef steak. That is about 2.30, and your lunch some hours in retard.

THE IPEK PASS IN WINTER.

We had reached stage three, and even Jo succumbed to the charms of the " Tab."

Famished we came to a café.

" Eggs ? " we gasped to the host.

" Nema " (haven't got any), he replied.

" Milk ? "

" Nema."

" Cheese ? " crescendo.

" Nema."

" Bread ? " fortissimo.

" Nema."

Despairing we swallowed three more luncheon tablets each and whined for tea. Ramases, who seemed to get along on tea alone, promised us a well-stocked café in an hour and a half.

The second café was purely Albanian. We climbed up some rickety stairs into a room which had—strange to relate—a fireplace. About the room was a sleeping dais where three or four black and white ruffians were couched. There was a little window with a deep seat into which we squeezed and loudly demanded eggs, bread and cheese. An old woman all rags and tatters came in and squeezed up alongside, where she crouched, spinning a long wool thread and staring up into Jo's face. Several cats were lounging about the room, but one came close and began to squirm as though she were " setting " a mouse. Suddenly

she pounced, seized the old woman's food bag from her feet, swept it on to the floor, and disappeared with it beneath the dais, where all the rest of the cats followed. The old woman, who had been plying distaff and spindle the while, let out a yell of fury and half disappeared beneath the platform. We all roared with laughter, while beneath us the cats spat and the old woman cursed, beating about with the handle of her distaff till she had rescued her dinner. She backed out with the bag, sat down again and started spinning once more as though nothing had happened.

Beyond this café the track became very stony and rough. We passed a typical couple. The man was carrying a light bag full of bottles, while the women had on her back a huge wooden chest, in which things rattled and bumped as she stumped along.

Jo looked at her with pity. "That's heavy," she said.

The woman stared stupidly and answered nothing; but the man smiled and said—

"Yes, heavy. Bogami."

We passed more caravans of that all too soon benzine. Cliffs began to tower up on every side, and precipices to fall away beneath our feet to a greenish roaring torrent; great springs spouted from the rocks and dashed down upon the stones

below in shredded foam: one was pink in colour. Here once a general and his lady were riding, and the lady's horse slipped. The general grasped her but lost his own balance, and both fell into the river and were killed. The track wound up and down, often very slippery underfoot, and the horses, shod with the usual flat plates of iron, were slithering and sliding on the edge of the precipices. At last we got off and walked. It was an immense relief: our saddles were intensely hard, stirrups unequal lengths, and with knots which rubbed unmercifully on the shins. We passed a man who was evidently an Englishman, and he stared at us as we passed, but neither stopped. The gorge grew deeper, the stream more rapid. The cliffs towered higher, black and grey in huge perpendicular stripes. We heard sounds of thunder or of blasting which reverberated in the canyon; it was oppressive and gloomy, and one shuddered to think what it would be like if an earthquake occurred. The cliffs ceased abruptly in a huge grass slope on which crowds of people were working on the new road; we crossed the river over a wooden bridge.

We came down into Ipek suddenly, past the old orange towered monastery, which lies, its outer walls half buried, keeping the landslides at bay. Ramases, who had suddenly put on another air, flung his leg over the saddle—he had previously

been sitting sideways—and twisted his moustache skywards. Jo wished to canter on, but he sternly forbade her, flipping her horse on the nose and driving it back when she tried to pass; for it would have damned his manly dignity for ever had a woman preceded him.

Our first view of Ipek was of a forest of minarets shooting up from the orchards, not a house was to be seen. Ramases tried to make us lodge in a vague looking building. We asked him if that were the best hotel. He answered nonchalantly, "Nesnam" (don't know); so we hunted for ourselves, discovering in the main square a blue house labelled "Hotel Skodar" in large letters.

CHAPTER XI

IPEK, DECHANI AND A HAREM

We entered the courtyard of the inn. Tiny as it was all Ipek seemed to be plucking poultry in it. An urbane old woman came forward, evidently the owner. She had short arms, and her hair grey at the roots was stained with henna, which matched her eyes. A dog fancier once told us never to buy a dog with light-coloured eyes if we wanted a trustful loving nature, so we wondered if it applied to humans.

She showed us a tiny dungeon-like room entirely filled up by two beds. We were not impressed; but she assured us that we should have a large beautiful room the next day for the same price. So we engaged it and strolled out into the evening.

Buffaloes were sitting in couples round the big square. They chewed the cud with an air of incomparable wisdom so remote from the look of reproachful misery that is generally worn by an ox. Goats came in from the hills with their hair clipped

in layers, which gave them the appearance of ladies in five-decker skirts; and children were playing a queer game. They jumped loosely round in circles with bent knees, making a whooping-cough noise followed by a splutter. We saw it often afterwards, and decided that it must be the equivalent to our "Ring o' Roses."

Work was over for the day, the sun set behind the hills which ringed us round, and we went to kill time in a café.

While we were exchanging coffees with an "American," who was showing us the excellences of his wooden leg which he had made himself, a breathless man ran in.

He had been searching the town for us. The governor had ordered him to put us up, as his had the notoriety of being a clean house. Having taken a room already with the amiable old lady we feared to disappoint her, so we decided not to move. The man piteously hoped that we were not offended; and we explained at length.

When we reached the hotel again our old hostess bustled up, more sugary than ever.

"We have just thought of a little rearrangement," she said.

"How so?"

"Well, do you understand, the inn is very full to-night, so we thought it best that you should

both take the one bed and I and my daughter will take the other."

"Oh," said we, "in that case we had better move altogether, we have anoth——"

"Indeed, no no," said the old lady, horrified. "Stay, stay. There sit down. It is good, keep your beds." She patted us and left us.

We had an uninspired dinner. Greasy soup, tough boiled meat which had produced the soup, minced boiled meat in pepper pods, and two pears which turned out to be bad. The company, composed of officers and nondescripts, pleased us no better than the dinner, so we decided to eat elsewhere on the morrow.

The governor's secretary came in to arrange for an interview with his chief—yet another Petrovitch and brother to the governor of Scutari. By this time we had each imbibed a dozen Turkish coffees during the day, but we slept for all that from nine until nine in the morning.

Marko Petrovitch, whom we saw early, was the best and last Petrovitch we met in Montenegro. Like all the Petrovitches he wore national costume. He was handsome, shy, and kindly, said we must go to Dechani the most famous of Balkan monasteries, and promised us a cart for the journey.

After leaving the governor we plunged into melodrama.

Hearing a noise we discovered crowds of weeping women and children round the steps of a shop. A young man in French fireman's uniform seemed to be very active, and an old trousered woman passively rolled down the steps after receiving a box on the ears.

We thought it was a policeman arresting an elderly thief; but Jo, seeing blood on the lady's face, told him he was a "bad man." He lurched, staring at her stupidly. His companions, more firemen, came forward grinning sheepishly, and we recommended them to lead him away out of mischief. But the next minute a balloon-trousered child rushed up to us and tugged at Jan's coat.

"Quick, the devil man is doing more bad things."

We ran down the road beyond the village and saw him in the distance dancing on an old Turk's bare feet with hobnailed boots, alternating this amusement with cuffs on the face. We sprinted along, and seeing a convenient little river wriggling along by the roadside, Jan caught him by the neck and the seat of his trousers, swung him round, and pitched him in. The man sat for a moment, bewildered, in the water, and then climbed out uttering dreadful oaths; but as he came up Jan knocked him into the water again.

Men in firemen's uniforms appeared from all sides, shouting—

"What are you doing? You mustn't. Who are you?"

"We know the governor," said Jo. The men were making gestures of deference when the reprobate rushed from the river, aiming a whirling blow at Jan which missed.

The men hurled themselves on him, but he grabbed Jan's coat to which he clung, howling in unexpected English—

"Shake 'ands wi' y' ennemi." Suddenly everybody spoke English, and we wondered into what sort of a fairy tale had we fallen.

It was lunch time so we did not stay for explanations, but hurried back to the town with the weeping old Turk, gave him our small change, which seemed to cure the pains in his feet, and hunted for the other hotel.

It was tucked away in a romantic back street. The bar room was tiny, but it was very pleasant to sit round little tables under shady trees in the courtyard.

"What have you for lunch?" we asked a solid-looking waiter boy.

"Nema Ruchak, bogami." We have no lunch. We looked at all the other people absorbing meat and soup.

"Give us what you have."

"We have nothing, bogami."

"Have you soup?"

"Yes, bogami."

"And cheese?"

"Ima, ima, bogami."

"That will do for us."

He thereupon brought macaroni soup, boiled meat, roast meat, fried potatoes, cheese, grapes, and coffee.

We never found out why in Montenegro they should make it a point of honour to say they have nothing. It resembles the Chinese habit of alluding to a "loathsome" wife and a "disgusting" daughter.

After lunch we visited our own hotel and found mine hostess waiting for us with her short arms akimbo. She wanted the "beautiful large bedroom" to which we had moved in the morning, finding it the same size as the one below, but rather lighter. Its former occupant had arrived, and we were to go back to the dungeon.

"That is not good," said Jo, and we flatly refused to go downstairs.

"If we leave this room we go altogether."

She again patted us and begged us to consider the matter closed. We could stick to the room.

Certainly that dog fancier was right.

There was a very old monastery which we had passed as we rode into Ipek.

Although we are more interested in the people of the present than in ruins of the past, these old Serbian monuments leave so strange a memory of a civilization suddenly cut off at its zenith that they have an emotional appeal far apart from that of archæology. These little oases of culture preserved amongst a wilderness of Turk tempt the traveller with a romance which is now vanishing from Roman and Greek ruins.

The Ipek monastery is a beautiful old place with the walls half buried on one side. The old church, orange outside, is very dark within, but contains many beautiful paintings. Surely here is the home of Post Impressionism and of Futurism. The decorations of the bases of the pillars are quite futuristic even orpeistic.

The pictures are Byzantine. But the Turks have picked out the eyes, as they always do. One enormous painting of a head which filled a semicircle over a door is particularly fine. Most halos are round, but the painter had deemed the ears and beard worthy of extra bulges in this saint's halo, which added to the decorative effect.

Beautiful apple trees were dotted about the big garden through which the wriggly river ran. Ducks, geese and turkeys wandered around, so fat that they were indifferent to the meal that was being served out to them. A boy woke up the mother of a

family of young turkeys and pushed her towards the dinner with his foot. She hurried there involuntarily and sat down for a nap with her back to the plate, the picture of outraged dignity.

We got into conversation with a priest, who insisted we should call upon the archbishop. The Metropolitan was a cheery soul, wearing a Montenegrin pork-pie hat very much on one side, and black riding breeches which showed as his long robes fluttered during his many gesticulations.

While with him we lost the impression that we were living in the unreal times of the Rose and the Ring. He was intensely civilized, spoke French excellently, and had many a good story of his life in Constantinople and other places. For the English he had great affection. The last Englishman in Ipek, a king's messenger, had flown to the monastery to escape from the Hotel Europe and its bugs. The next morning he would not get up. The archbishop went to his room to remonstrate.

"No, no," said he; "I spent two nights under a ceiling which rained bugs upon me, and I know a good bed when I've got it."

Coffee and cigarettes came in, of the best, and the rakia was a thing apart from the acrid stuff we were accustomed to.

He admitted its superiority. The plums came from his own estate, and were distilled by the monks.

The great difficulty was to prevent him from giving us too much.

We talked of the war, and he related many atrocities, winding up with "Of course, England must win; but what will become of us in the meanwhile?"

That evening we had a visitor. A very large Montenegrin in French fireman's uniform knocked at the door. He said his name was Nikola Pavlovitch. He had been sent by the governor to apologise for the "trouble" Jan had had that morning with the drunken soldier.

"'E in jail now, 'e verry sorry and say if you forgive 'im, mister, 'e never touch rakia, never no more. 'E good chap reely. Got too much rakia this mornin'. 'E think about Turks an' get kinder mad some'ow. 'E don't know what 'e done; first thing 'e knows 'e finds 'imself in river."

Nikola Pavlovitch was, though not an officer, the commandant of a contingent of miners from America. The governor had told him also to offer himself as cicerone for the morrow, the cart having been ordered for our trip to Dechani.

We didn't like cicerones and demurred.

"I kin talk for you," he said. But we owned to speaking Serb.

"I know all de country, kin tell you things: bin 'ere twenty years ago."

We saw he wanted to come, and noticed that he had a very likable face, strong features, straight kindly eyes. We realized that he would be a very pleasant companion and arranged to meet at the stable the next day.

And so, at last, we drove in one of the queer little Serb carts we had avoided so anxiously. A few planks nailed together and bound around with an insecure rail, four wheels slipped on to the axles with no pins to hold them, a Turkish driver dangling his legs—such was our chariot. Some hay was produced to improvise a seat; we bought some apples on tick, as the vendor said he had no change for our one shilling note, and off we drove.

Nikola Pavlovitch started yarning almost at once, and we never had a dull moment. He was a comitaj once, in the old days when Turkey owned Macedonia and the Sanjak. He said that nearly all comitaj were men of education and intelligence. When Turkish rule became oppressive, when too many Christian girls were stolen and vanished for ever into harems, the comitaj appeared, farms were raided, minute but fierce battles were fought; but in spite of this continual supervision, occasional and mysterious murders were needed to keep down the excesses of the Turk.

Pavlovitch waved a hand towards the sullen mountains of Albania, which were on our right.

"Dose Swabs don' tink o' nuttin' but killin'. Jess ornary slaughter, Mister Jim. Now dat Jakovitza [a town to the south] dat don't mean nuttin but 'blood' in their talk, 'lots o' blood' dat's what it means. Sure. Dese peoples don' respect nuttin but killin'; an' when you've done in 'bout fifty other fellers you'r reckoned a almighty tough. If you wanted to voyage dere, f'r instance, you'd 'ave ter get a promise o' peace, a 'Besa' they calls it, from one of dese tough fellers, and he makes 'imself responsible to end any feller wat disturbs you; 'e can post a babby along o' you and so long as the kiddie's wid yer nobody'll touch you. Dats so, Mister Jim, you bleeve me. But all de same, dey've fixed it up so's dis killing business ain't perlite wen deres women about, so every feller taks 'is wife along 'o 'im so's not to be ended right away."

Every house by the roadside was a fortress, loopholes only in the ground floor, windows peering from beneath the eaves and turrets with gunslits at the second story; here and there were old Turkish blockhouses, solid and square, showing how the conquerors had feared the conquered.

"One o' dese tough fellers 'e kill more'n hundred fellers. Great chief 'e is. Wen 'e was sixteen 'is fader get condemned ter prison way in Mitrovitza. Dis young tough 'e walk inter court

nex' day, in 'e kill de judge and two of de officers and 'scape inter de mountains."

Nick himself when he was a comitaj had twice been caught by the Turks. Once he was shot in thirteen places at once, but was found by some Christian women and eventually recovered; the second time the Turks beat him almost to death with fencing staves, and though they thought him dying put him on an ox cart and sent him to the interior of Turkey.

"I was ravin' mad dat journey," he said. "I don' want ter go ter 'ell if it's like dat."

They put him in hospital and treated him kindly; but once better they threw him into a Turkish gaol. He described how the prison was dark as night, because the poorer prisoners blocked up the windows, stretching their arms through for doles from the passers-by.

"We was all eaten wi' lice," he went on, "an' if de folks 'adn't sent me money an' food I'd a starved to def, sure. 'N den dey bribes de governor 'n a soldier, 'n dey lets me 'scape."

He lay a cripple in Montenegro six months, but in the summer crawled down to the Bocche de Cattaro and on the sweltering shores of the Adriatic built himself a primitive sweat bath. In a few weeks he was better, and in a few months cured. He then went to the mines in America, for he dared

not return to Macedonia. He saved £800 and returned with it to his sister's in Serbia, but was so oppressed by the misery about him that he gave away all his money and went back.

"Dere's lots a mineral in dese mountains, you feller. I show you one lump feller got a' Ipek, an' I guess it's silver, sure. Wen de war over you come back an' we'll go over dem places tergedder. Dere's coal too. Lots."

He told us that the wretched skeleton who was driving us had power in Turkish days to commandeer the services of Christian labourers, and to pay them nothing.

We passed by placid fields containing cows, horses, donkeys. The country seemed untouched by war. Those cows could never have drawn heavy carts and lain exhausted and foodless after a heavy day's work. The horses reminded one of the sleek mares owned by old ladies who lived in awe of their coachmen.

For this all belonged to Dechani, and it was beyond the power of the state to touch their riches; nor had they been molested even in the days of Turkish rule.

"You see, monastery 'e pay money to the toughest Albanians—Albanian they give besa—and nobody never do no 'arm to the monasteries. Russia she send much money, she send always her

priest to Dechani and the Turks they keep sorter respectful."

Our first sight of Dechani disappointed us a little, the proportions lacked the beauty of the Ipek church; but the big old door marked by the fire the Turks had built against it, decades before, cheered us up a bit.

A pleasant priest with a smooth face and ringlets two feet long greeted us and led us to the little Russian hospital which was fitted into the Abbey, warning us not to bang our heads against the heavy oak beams in the corridors.

The Russians welcomed us heartily, preparing the most wonderful tea, Australian butter, white bread made with flour brought from Russia.

Pavlovitch enjoyed himself immensely. Food was thin in the barracks. But he was very worried about the priest's long ringlets.

"I'd soon cure 'im, a month diggin' de trench!" he murmured.

After tea we examined the church. The interior was one miraculous blue: pictures with blue backgrounds, apostles with blue draperies, blue skies, a wonderful lapis lazuli.

Once the Moslems had overpowered the defenders of the church and had got in, the eyes of some of the saints were picked through the plaster. Legend runs, however, that while they were desecrating

the tomb of Tzar Stephan who founded the church, the tomb of the queen, which lay alongside, exploded with a violent report and terror struck the Turks, who fled.

They showed us the queen's tomb, split from top to bottom. The priests naturally claim a miracle; but Pavlovitch said, "I tink dey verry clever, dey done dat wi' gunpowder."

The Tzar Stephan had wished to build the church of gold and precious stones, but a soothsayer said—

"No, my lord, build it of plain stone, for your empire will be robbed from you, and if it be of gold greedy men will tear it to pieces, but if it be of plain stone it will remain a monument for ever."

So he built it of fine marble. The central pillars were forty feet high, and each cut from a single piece, with grotesque carved capitals. The great screen was wonderfully carved and gilded. Wherever one looked was decoration, almost in excess.

Ringlets invited us to tea with the Russian bishop who was in charge. He was a stout, sweet-mannered little man, who shook his head woefully over the war.

Somehow Pavlovitch discovered that he and the bishop were the same age, forty-eight. We contrasted Pavlovitch's spare athletic frame with the well-fed shape of the bishop, and felt

instinctively which was the better Christian. Coffee and slatka were brought in. This slatka is always handed to callers in well-regulated Serbian households. It is jam accompanied by many little spoons and glasses of water. Each guest dips out a spoonful, licks the spoon, drinks the water, and places his spoon in the glass. There is also a curious custom with regard to the coffee. If a guest outstays his welcome, a second cup is brought in and ceremoniously placed before him—but, of course, this hint depends upon how it is done.

"It is Friday," remarked Pavlovitch, regretfully. "Odder days we gits mighty good meal." He was very anxious for us to stay the night so that we should fit in a first-class breakfast, but the morrow was the Ipek fair, and we could not miss that.

Night was coming so we hurried off and drove away. The horses went quite fast, as we had made them a present of some barley. We had discovered that since the beginning of the war, when they had been requisitioned by the Montenegrin Government, they had lived on nothing but hay, and the owner, who was driving them, said that they would soon die, and that when they did he would not receive a penny and would be a ruined man. He added pathetically—

"One does not like to see one's beasts die like that, for after all one is fond of them."

We arrived after dark, and ordered supper for three. The inn lady was scandalized.

"But that is a common soldier," she said. "There are many fine folk in the dining-room, arrived to-day. The General——"

So we dined upon the landing.

The next day we got up very early, went down to the dining-room and found it was full of sleeping forms; we had coffee in our room.

We wandered round the market. It was still too early, people were arriving and spreading their wares, men were hanging bright carpets on the white walls. Beggars were everywhere, exhibiting their gains in front of them. If one could understand they seemed to cry like this—

"Ere y'are, the old firm; put your generous money on the real thing. I 'as more misery to the square inch than any other 'as to the square yard."

We found bargaining impossible, as they only spoke Albanian, and we could only get as far as "Sar," how much.

Pavlovitch turned up later and was very helpful. We hurried him to a silver shop which was displaying a round silver boss. He beat them down from sixteen to ten dinars, after which we plunged

into a side street filled with women squatted cross-legged behind a collection of everything that an industrious woman who owns sheep can confection.

"I have nothing for thee," said an old woman to Jo, who peered into her basket—Pavlovitch translating.

Jo withdrew a tiny pair of stockings—a marvel of knitting in many coloured patterns.

"What about these?" she said.

"Hast thou children?"

"No; but how much?" said Jo.

The price was four piastres. Jo gave four groschen and the old woman peered anxiously at the money in her palm.

"It is too much," she said.

Pavlovitch explained that somehow four groschen worked out to more than four piastres; but we left her to calculate what fractions of a centime she had gained.

Our old innkeeper looked very truculent when we entered.

"Are you going to lunch here?"

"No; we left word."

"Then you can't stay here."

We pointed out that her meals were bad and very dear. She retaliated by making a fearful noise, and invited us to go and sleep at the Europe;

IN THE BAZAAR OF IPEK.

STREET COFFEE SELLER IN IPEK.

but we remembered the Archbishop's story and stood firm.

"If you don't leave us in peace we will appeal to the Governor."

"Do, do. Go to the Governor," said the old lady, her little girl, a wry-mouthed charwoman and a little boy whom Jo had noticed stealing our cigarettes. The dog joined in and barked vociferously.

We went to the Governor who was near by. "They don't understand innkeeping here, and she is a drunken old slut," he said, and sent for her husband.

We went defiantly again to the Europe for lunch.

Jo had been expressing her wish to Pavlovitch to visit a harem. He came to tell us that it had been arranged, as the chief of the police was a friend of his, and he had asked a rich Moslem to let her visit his wives. The Moslem had graciously assented, saying that he would do it as a great favour to the chief of the police, and that no "European" woman had ever visited an Ipek harem.

We went down the broad street with its brilliant houses, admiring the gaudy colours of the women's trousers. "What a pity," we said, "that such a word as *loud* was invented in the English language."

Outside a huge doorway were sitting the chief of police and the wealthy Albanian. We were introduced with great ceremony, and the Moslem, losing no time, took Jo through the doorway into a courtyard. At the end was another door guarded by a responsible-looking Albanian. He stood aside, and she entered another court full of trees and a basket-work hut. She passed through the lower story, which was full of grain, and ascended into a beautiful room with a seat built all round it.

It was entirely furnished with carpets. He waved his hand to the seat, called to his wives much as a sportsman summons his dogs, and left.

They came in, three women, simply dressed in chemise and flowered cotton bloomers. Their voices were shaking with excitement, and they were fearfully upset because Jo got up to shake hands with them.

They only spoke Albanian, and a few words of Serb. One had been very beautiful, but her teeth were decayed, another was a healthy-looking young woman, and the third was frankly hideous.

They brought coffee, the chief wife presenting it with her hand across her chest—a polite way of saying—

"I am your slave."

Jo spoke Serb, and they clearly said in Albanian—

"If only we could tell what you are saying."

After which every one sat and beamed, and they kept calling for somebody.

A plump dark-eyed girl came in, the first wife's daughter. She spoke Serb, and interpreted for the wives.

They wanted to know everything, but knew so little that they could grasp nothing.

Where had Jo come from? She tried London, Paris; no use, they had never heard of them—two weeks on the sea—they didn't know what the sea was, nor ships nor boats. They had never left Ipek and only knew the little curly river.

The girl said that "devoikas" did not learn to read and write. That was for the men.

Jo finally explained that she had ridden on horseback from Plevlie. Then they gasped—

"How far you have travelled! What a wonderful life, and does your husband let you speak to other men?"

She asked them what they did.

"Nothing." "Sewing?" "A little," they owned with elegant ease.

The chief wife had recently lost one of her children, but did not seem to know of what it had died.

"I should think a woman doctor would be useful here," said Jo.

They screamed with laughter. "How funny! Why, she would be *so* thick!" they said, stretching their arms as wide as they could.

They kept inventing pretexts for keeping her, but when she rose to go for the third time they regretfully bade her farewell, the daughter took both her hands and imprinted a smacking kiss.

Outside the healthy-looking wife emerged from the basket hut, where she was evidently preparing some delicacy to bring up, and showed signs of deep disappointment.

The responsible-looking man who let her out also expressed his regrets that she had not stayed longer. In the great street doorway was seated the husband, but no Jan, no Pavlovitch, so Jo sat with him, somewhat embarrassed, eating bits of apple which he peeled for her.

In the afternoon we went to bid farewell to the Archbishop and took Pavlovitch with us. The Archbishop gave Pavlovitch a poor welcome until he heard his name.

"Are *you* Nikola Pavlovitch, of whom I have heard so much from the Governor? I thought you were only a common soldier. I have met you at last."

We felt we were really consorting with the great.

Jo related her harem experiences, and he told of the attempts of the young Turks in Constantinople to abolish the veil, of how he had assisted at small dinner parties where the ladies had discarded their veils, and of the ferocity with which the priests and leaders had fought and quashed the movement.

One lady had ventured unveiled into the bazaar, and one of the lowest of women had given her a blow on the face. On appealing to a policeman she had received small comfort, as he told her she ought to be ashamed of herself.

As we went home we met women coming home from the fair with unsold carpets. They accosted us and wanted to know why we were writing them in the morning so that they could tell their relatives all about it.

When we reached our bedroom the old innkeeper came in. In dulcet tones she admired our purchases. We were rather stiff.

Suddenly she fell upon Jo's neck saying, "You mustn't be angry with me," and remained there explaining.

When she left, Jo looked gravely at Jan, took a toothcomb, let down her hair, and worked hard for a while.

Next day we went for a long walk. As we were returning a terrific storm burst over us. We had

left our mackintoshes in the inn, and were soon wet through. We got back just at supper time, and after, as Jan had no change of clothing, he decided to go to bed in his wet things, heaping blankets and rugs over himself in the hopes of being dry by the morrow.

CHAPTER XII

THE HIGHWAY OF MONTENEGRO—II

JAN awoke nearly dry, or in a sort of warm dampness, at 4.30 a.m. Not a soul was about, and we packed by candle. There was a purple dawn, and the towering cliffs behind the minarets glowed a deep cerise for at least ten minutes ere the light reached the town. The streets were still and deserted, but at last an old man with a coffee machine on his back, and a tin waistbelt full of pigeon-holes containing cups, took a seat at a corner. At six he was surrounded by groups of Albanian workmen drinking coffee, and he beckoned us to come and take coffee with him, but we were suspicious of the cleanliness of his crockery. A miserable-looking woman in widow's weeds was loitering about the door of the post office, and with her was a tattered girl surrounded by trunks, suitcases, and bandboxes, so we guessed they were there to be fellow passengers. A waggon loaded with boxes halted before them, but the widow declined to let *her* baggage go by it.

At last the post waggon came. It was a small springless openwork cart with a rounded hood on it, so that it could roll when it upset—which was the rule rather than the exception—luggage accommodation was provided only for the " soap and tooth-brush " type of traveller; but the widow insisted upon packing in all her movables, and after that we four squeezed into what room was left. The seat was low, one's chin and knees were in dangerous proximity, and a less ideal position for travelling some thirty-five miles could not be imagined. The widow's portmanteau, all knobs and locks, was arranged to coincide with Jo's spine. The tattered maid was loaded with five packages on her knees which she could not control, so we looked as cheerful as we could and said to ourselves, " Anyway it will do in the book."

At the start Jan was rather grateful for the squash, for the air was chilly; soon the damp, exposed parts of his clothing cooled to freezing point, and it was lucky that they were not more extensive.

As we rolled over the craters and crests of the—what had once been—stone-paved streets, the driver halted, here to buy a large loaf of bread, there to purchase smelly cheese, and finally to pick up a gold-laced officer, whom we took to be the post-guard. The driver, who sat back to back with

Jan, grumbled at him because he took up too much room. But Jan replied that it was his own fault for not making the carriage bigger, and that his knees were not telescopic. We received the post of Montenegro, for this was the only road out; it consisted of three letters and a circular, so we judged that Montenegrin censorship was pretty strict.

The road was flat, the surrounding country covered with little scrubby oak bushes, in and out of which ran innumerable black pigs who had long cross pieces bound to their necks to prevent them from pushing through hedges into the few maize fields. As the miles passed Jan slowly began to dry, his temperature went up and his temper became better. The widow, we discovered, was the relict of a Greek doctor who had died of typhus in Plevlie, and she was returning to her native land.

Presently we came to a small inn, a hut like all others, and the driver commanded us to get out. By this time we were accustomed to the sight of nobles kissing market women relatives, and it did not surprise us to see the officer embrace the rather dirty hostess of the inn and kiss all the children; but when he took his place behind the bar and began to serve the coffee! . . . It was a minute before we realized that he had not been guarding

the three letters and the circular, but merely was returning home.

At the Montenegrin frontier, which was some hours on, a soldier asked us for a lift, as though he could not see that we were already bulging at all points with excess luggage ; at the Serbian frontier Jan was asked for his passport, and as they did not demand that of the widow, we concluded that they imagined her to be Mrs. Gordon, and Jo and the tattered one, two handmaids.

Immediately over the frontier the road began to be Serbian, but not as Serbian as it became later on, and we reached Rudnik—and lunch—in good condition. Another carriage similar to our own was here, containing a Turkish family. The father, a great stalwart Albanian, and the son a budding priest in cerise socks. The priest was carrying food to his carriage, and we discovered that a woman was within, stowed away at the back like the widow's luggage, and carefully protected by two curtains, so that no eye should behold her. Her sufferings between Rudnik and Mitrovitza can be imagined when you have heard ours.

From Rudnik we walked to ease our cramped limbs, and the road became so bad that the driver went across country to avoid it. Here is the receipt for making a Serbian road.

" The engineer in charge shall send two hundred

bullock trains from Here to There. He shall then find out along which path the greater number have travelled (*i.e.* which has the deepest ruts), after which an Austrian surveyor shall map it and mark it, 'Road to There.' Should the ruts become so deep that the carts are sliding upon their bottoms rather than travelling upon their wheels, an overseer must be sent to throw stones at it. He and ten devils worse than himself shall heave rocks till they think they have hurt it enough, when they may return home, leaving the road ten times worse than before, for the boulders by no means are to fill the ruts, but only to render them more exciting."

Oh, we walked. Indeed, we walked a good deal more than the driver thought complimentary, we got out at every uphill, and put steam on so that we should not be caught on the downhills. By supreme efforts we managed to get in four hours' walking out of the torturous thirteen. Once—when we were a long way ahead—we were stopped by a gendarme.

"Where are your passports?" demanded he.

"In the post-waggon," replied Jan.

"Why did you leave your passports in the post-waggon?"

"Because they were in the pocket of my great-coat."

"Why did you leave your great-coat in the post-waggon?"

"Because it is hot."

"I shall have to arrest you," quoth the gendarme.

But his officer came from an adjoining building and told him not to make a fool of himself, and on we went, taking short cuts, following the telegraph poles, which staggered across country like a file of drunkards.

Eventually the carriage caught us up and the driver insisted that we should get in. He added that he could not lose all day while we walked, and that he would never get to Mitrovitza; it seemed superfluous to point out that we had gone quicker than he, but to avoid argument we clambered in. The driver, in a temper, slashed his horses, and off we went, over ruts and stones full speed ahead. It was like being in a small boat in a smart cross-choppy sea, with little torpedoes exploding beneath the keel at three minute intervals; and this road was marked on the map as a first-class road; the mind staggers at what the second and third-class must be like. These countries are still barbarous at heart, but Europe cries out upon open atrocities, and so they have invented the post-waggon. After all, pain is a thing one can add up, and the sum total of misery produced by

the post, travelling daily, must in time exceed that of the Spanish Inquisition. Thus do they gratify their brutal natures.

We bounded along. The brakes did not work, the carriage banged against the horses' hocks, who, in turn, leapt forwards, and our four heads met in a resounding thump in the centre of the waggon; after which Jo insisted that the widow should turn her hatpins to the other side. The widow's luggage cast loose and hit us in cunning places when we were not looking. The cart rocked and heaved, and we expected it to turn over. There were other waggons on the road—heavy, slow ox carts, exporting wool or importing benzine or ammunition, with wheels of any shape bar round—some were even octagonal; and as they filed along they gave forth sounds reminiscent of Montenegrin song, a last wail from the hospitable little country whose borders we were leaving behind us.

The driver promised us a better road further on; but the better road never came, and we hung on waiting for something to break and give us relief. There were hints, it is true, unfinished hints: some day men will be able to travel in comfort from Mitrovitza to Ipek, but the day is not yet. It is strange how the human frame gets used to things, and we grew to believe that our driver not only liked, but joyed in each extra bang and jolt—collected

them as it were—for certainly he never avoided anything, though occasionally he wound at the brake, but that was only for show, because he knew that it did not work.

We reached Mitrovitza at dark with bones unbroken, and rattled down a road with vague white Turkish houses upon one side, and a muddy looking stream reflecting dull lights on the other. One last lurid lunge, we leapt across a drain and broke a trace bar, but too late, we had arrived.

The Hotel Bristol was full—why are there so many hotels in Serbia named Bristol?—but we were received by a stupid-looking maid at the Kossovo, and were given a paper to sign, saying who we were. Then down to the restaurant, where we had a beefsteak which was a dream, and back to bed, which was a nightmare, for all night long we bounced and banged and bruised our journey over again, and awoke quite exhausted.

The first impression of a town which is entered by moonlight is usually difficult to recover on the following morning, it is often like the glimpse of a pretty girl caught, say, in a theatre lobby, and the charm may never be rewoven. So it was with Mitrovitza, which in daylight seemed just a dull, ordinary Turkish town. The Prefect was a bear, and sent us on a long unnecessary walk to the station, a mile and a half. Sitting on the road was

the dirtiest beggar we had yet seen. As we came towards her she chanted our praises, bowing before us and kissing the dust; but she aroused only feelings of disgust and getting nothing, she turned to curses till we were out of sight. The chief imports at the station seemed to be cannons and maize; the only exports, millstones, which looked like and seemed almost as palatable as Serbian bread. We did our business without trouble, and coming back the beggar praised us once more till we had passed, then hurled even louder curses after us.

We came to a tiny café in which were faint tinkling, musical sounds.

Jan: "I wonder what that is?"

Jo: "It sounds queer: shall we explore?"

Jan: "I dunno, perhaps they wouldn't like us."

Jo: "Come along. Let's see anyhow."

And up we went. In a large room was a deep window seat, and in the window the queerest little Turkish dwarf imaginable. The little dwarf was sitting cross-legged, and was playing a plectrum instrument. His head was huge, his back was like a bow, and his plectrum arm bent into an S curve, which curled round his instrument as though it had been bent to fit. He was a born artist, and rapped out little airs and trills which made the heart dance. There were three soldiers at tables,

and presently one sprang out on to the floor and began to posture and move his feet, a woman joined him; the little man's music grew wild and more rapid; another man sprang in, another woman joined, and soon all four were stamping and jigging till the floor rocked beneath them. We gave the little man a franc for his efforts, and his broad face nearly split in his endeavour to express a voiceless gratitude.

We were no longer royalty, we were just dull, ordinary everyday folk, and at the station had endless formalities to go through, examinations of passes, etc., during which time all intending passengers were locked in the waiting-room. But at last we were allowed to take seats in the train, and off we went.

We passed through the plain of Kossovo where old Serbian culture was prostrated before the onrush of the Turk, and whence Serbia has drawn all its legends and heroes; possibly the most unromantic looking spot in all Europe, save only Waterloo. Here, far to the left, was Mahmud's tomb:—Mahmud the great victor, stabbed the day before the battle, and dying as he saw his armies victorious. History contains no keener romance. Serge the hero, accompanied by two faithful servants, galloped to the Turkish camp, and commanded an interview with the Moslem general,

who thought he was coming to be a traitor. In face of the Divan the hero flung himself from his horse, drew his sword, and stabbed Mahmud where he sat, surrounded by his armies. Before the astounded guards had recovered their surprise, Serge was again upon his great charger and was out of the camp, cutting down any who barred his passage. Mahmud did not die immediately, and his doctors slew a camel and thrust him into the still quivering animal; when the dead beast was cooling, they slew another, and thus the Moslem was kept alive till the Serbian hosts had been overthrown. He and the Serbian Czar were buried on the same field—one dead in victory, one in defeat.

We trundled slowly over the great plain whose decision altered the fate of the world, for who knows what might have grown up under a great Byzantine culture? The farms were solidly built houses with great well-filled yards, surrounded by high and defensible walls. We came into stations where long shambling youths, dressed in badly made European clothes, lounged and ogled the girls in "this style, 14/6" dresses. Signs of culture!

Why should the bowler hat, indiarubber collars, and bad teeth be indissolubly bound to "Education Bills" and "Factory Acts"? Why should the Serbian peasant be forced to give up his beautiful

costume for celluloid cuffs, lose his artistic instincts in exchange for a made-up tie? It is the march of civilization, dear people, and must on no account be hindered.

Coming back to Serbia from Montenegro was like slipping from a warm into a cool bath. One is irresistibly reminded that the Lords of Serbia withdrew to Montenegro, leaving the peasantry behind, for every peasant in the black mountains is a noble and carries a noble's dignity; while Karageorge was a pig farmer. There is a warmth in Montenegro—save only Pod.—which is not so evident in its larger brother; a welcome, which is not so easily found in Serbia. The Montenegrin peasant is like a great child, looking at the varied world with thirteenth-century unspoiled eyes; centuries of Turkish oppression has dulled the wit of the Serb, and at the outbreak of the war Teutonic culture was completing the process.

We passed beneath the shadow of Shar Dagh, the highest peak in the peninsula, six thousand feet from the plain, springing straight up to a point for all to admire, a mountain indeed.

We reached Uskub at dusk, found a hotel, and went out to dine. The restaurant was empty, but through a half-open door one could hear the sounds of music. The restaurant walls were—superfluously—decorated with paintings of food which

almost took away one's appetite; but one enormous panel of a dressed sucking pig riding in a Lohengrin-like chariot over a purple sea amused us.

In the beer hall a tinkly mandoline orchestra was playing, and a woman without a voice sang a popular song—one thought of the women on the Rieka River—a tired girl dressed in faded tights did a few easy contortions between the tables, and in a bored manner collected her meed of halfpence—we thought of the cheery idiot of Scutari. Was it worth it, we asked each other, this tinsel culture to which we had returned? And not bothering to answer the question went back to our hotel and to bed.

CHAPTER XIII

USKUB

Uskub is a Smell on one side of which is built a prim little French town finished off with conventionally placed poplars in true Latin style; and on the other side lies a disreputable, rambling Turkish village culminating in a cone of rock upon which is the old fortress called the Grad.

The country about Uskub is a great cemetery, and on every hand rise little rounded hills bristling with gravestones like almonds in a tipsy-cake. Strange old streets there are in Uskub. One comes suddenly upon half-buried mosques with grass growing from their dilapidated domes, a refuge only for chickens; some deserted baths, and in the midst of all, its outer walls like a prison and with prison windows, the old caravanserai.

We crept to its gateway and through a crack saw visions of a romantic courtyard. The gate was locked, and we asked a little shoemaker—

"Who has the key?"

"It is now a leather tannery," he answered, and directed us to a shoemaker in another street. This was full of shoemakers, and we chased the key from shop to shop. It was like "Hunt the slipper." At last we ran it to earth in the second waistcoat of a negligent individual in a fez.

How happy the merchant of old must have felt when he entered the courtyard after a long journey! The court was big and square, with a fountain in the centre, the pillars were blue, and the arches red. Tiers upon tiers of little rooms were built around; the expensive ones had windows and the cheap ones none, and the door of each was marked by the smoke of a thousand fires which had been lit within. Underneath were cubby holes for the merchants' goods, and behind it all was a great dark stable for the animals. Once shut up in the caravanserai one was safe from robbers, revolutions, and the outside world. Lying in the doorway, as if cast there by some gigantic ogre in a fit of temper, were two immense marble vases, and two queer carved stone figures. Who made these figures? Mystery—for Turkey does not carve. The old caravanserai no longer gives protection to the harassed traveller, it only cures his boots, for it has fallen from sanctuary to shoemakers, and the leather workers of Uskub cure their hides therein. Hence, despite its beauty, we did not loiter long,

for we have ever held a bad smell more powerful than a beautiful view.

Why don't towns look tragic when their bricks reek of tragedy? Why is industrial misery the only form in which the cry of the oppressed is allowed to take visible shape and to make the reputation of Realist artists? In Uskub is concentrated the whole problem of the Balkans and of Macedonia. Her brightly painted streets are filled with Serb, Bulgar, and Turk, each disliking the rule of the other, the Bulgar hating the Serb only worse than the Turk because the Serb is master. To the inquiring mind it is problematic how much of this hate is national, and how much political. Deprive these peasant populations of their jealous, land-grabbing propagandist rulers, and what rancour would remain between them? Intensive civilization, such as has been applied to these states—civilization which has swept one class to the twentieth century, while it leaves the others in its primitive simplicity—seems always to produce the worst results. Nations can only crawl to knowledge and to the possessions of riches, for politics to the simple are like "drinks" to the savage and equally deadly in effect.

Can the problem ever be resolved? Can Serbia with half her manhood wiped out stand against her jealous neighbours? The creation of a lot

A WINE MARKET IN USKUB.

of small states on republican principles seems a far-fetched idea, and yet it seems the best, especially if the menace of Turkey were removed, for there is little doubt that Turkey, rearmed by the German, might make one more effort to regain her lost territory under conditions vastly different from those which ruled in the Balkan conflict. Macedonia, Albania, and what is now Turkey in Europe, each made self-governing under the shield of the Alliance—why not?—and Serbia as compensation allowed to expand towards the north into territories which are wholly Serb in nationality and in feeling.

We went through the pot market, whose orange earthenware was glowing in the sun, and came upon an old house with such a wonderful ultramarine courtyard that we went in to look. Over the door was written Old Serb Café Jansie Han. After sketching there we entered the inn for coffee, and sat at tables made of thick blocks of marble smoothed only at the top. The innkeeper said it was built in the days of the Czar Duchan. If this were true, one would say that never had the interior been whitewashed since then. But there was an air of cosiness about it, and we visited it several times after. Near by was a little church with a wonderful carved screen and a picture of Elijah going to heaven

in a chariot drawn by a pink horse, with the charioteer bumping along on a separate cloud, which served as the box. We watched the sun set from one of the tipsy-cake hills, sitting on a gravestone with an old Turkish shepherd, who seemed to derive great comfort from our company.

The mountains around reflected the rosy lights of the sun in great flat masses.

The muezzin sounded from the many minarets, and twilight was on us. Uskub, romantic, dirty, unhealthy Uskub, was soon shrouded in mist; a vision of unusual beauty.

One thought of the awful winter it had passed through, when dead and dying had lain about the streets. Typhus, relapsing fever, and typhoid had gripped the town. Lady Paget's staff, while grappling with the trouble, had paid a heavy toll, as their hospital lay deep on the unhealthy part of the city. For a time the citadel was in the hands of an English unit. Before they were there it was a Serbian hospital, and the staff threw all the dirty, stained dressings over the cliff, down which they rolled to the road. The peasants used to collect these pestiferous morsels and made them into padded quilts. Little wonder that illness spread! In the summer Lady Paget's hospital withdrew to some great barracks on the hill. The

paths were made of Turkish tombstones, which were always used in Uskub for road metal.

The hospital staff was saddened by the recent death of Mr. Chichester, who had, like ourselves, just returned from a tour in the western mountains, where he caught paratyphoid and only lived a few days.

One of the doctors had been in Albania, on an inoculating expedition. At Durazzo he had been received by Essad Pacha, who was delighted to have his piano played, and to watch the hammers working inside. Like Helen's babies, "he wanted to see the wheels go wound." The piano and piles of music must have been a memento of the Prince and Princess of Wied and of their unhappy attempts at being Mpret and Mpretess—or is it Mpretitza, or Mpretina? The music was still marked with her name, and was certainly not a present to Essad.

The stamp of the English was on Uskub. Prices were high. One Turk offered us a rubbishy silver thing for fifteen dinars; and Jan laughed, saying that one could see the English had been there. Without blushing the man pointed to a twin article, saying he would let that go for five dinars.

What caused us to feel that we had wandered enough? Was it the awful cinematograph show which led us through an hour and a half of

melodrama without our grasping the plot, or was it that the large copper tray we bought filled us with a sense of responsibility ?

At this wavering moment Lady Paget held a meeting of her staff. We lunched there, and part of the truth leaked out after the meeting.

The Bulgars really were coming in against us, and in a day or two we were to see things.

That decided the matter. We went to the prefect's office for our pass. Firstly, we were ushered into a room occupied by a man in khaki, whose accent betrayed that he hailed from the States. He was "something sanitary," and belonged to the American commission, so we tried again. This time the porter took us up to a landing, said a few words into a doorway, and left us standing. As he was wandering in our vicinity, Jo tried one of her two talismans : it is the word "PREPOSTEROUS" ejaculated explosively, and is safely calculated to stagger a foreign soul. The other is a well-known dodge. If a person bothers you, look at his boots with a pained expression. He will soon take himself off—boots and all.

The talisman worked, the pass was quickly managed, and we had but to spend our time among the shops again. We resisted the seductions of an old man with fifty knives in his belt,

who reminded Jo of a horrible nightmare of her infancy.

In her dream a grandfather with a basket had come peddling. Suddenly his coat, blowing aside, revealed not a body, but a busy sewing-machine in excellent working order. In her agitation, Jo fell out of bed.

We sat consuming beer outside a café decked with pink flowered bushes in green boxes. One of the antique dames who cook sausages in the shadow of the cafés brought us a plate each—funny little hard things—and we bought cakes and nougat from perambulating Peter Piemen.

The station platform was like the last scene of a pantomime. Every one we had met on our journeys rushed up and shook us by the hand.

First a Belgian doctor, from Dr. Lilias Hamilton's unit in Podgoritza. He said Mrs. G. was also in the town, and that the others were all coming shortly. Then we met a young staff officer from Uzhitze, who was noted for his bravery. The train came in and we stumbled up to it in the dark. There was a crowd of women about the steps in difficulty with heavy bags. Jan ran forward to help one. She turned round. It was a sister from Dechani. The rest turned

round. It was the whole Russian mission from Dechani.

We proceeded along the corridor, and ran into two men. We mutually began to apologize.

"Hello," we said, "how did you get here?" They were two Americans we had met in Salonika.

We got our seats and went out of the train by the other door. As we passed the compartment we saw a familiar face. It was the little French courier.

"Quel pays," he said, bounding up. "Et les Bulgars, quoi?"

"Good Lord," said Jan. "Let's go out and get some fresh air."

The only people lacking to complete the scene were the Sirdar and Dr. Clemow.

A doctor who had just arrived from Salonika asked us to look after four English orderlies who, new to the country, were travelling to the Red Cross mission at Vrntze. With them were two trim, short-skirted, heavy booted, Belgian nurses, who were going to a Serbian field hospital.

The train crawled. At times it was necessary to hold one's breath to see if we were moving at all. It was always possible that the Bulgars

had blown up a bridge or so. One could imagine an anxious driver, his eyes fixed on the line in front, looking for Bulgarian comitaj.

The travellers were restless. Our little French courier stood in the corridor looking fiercely at the black night; his back view eloquently expressive of his opinion of the Balkans.

Later on we all slept. A frightful braying sound awoke us.

No, not Bulgars—only the band. Same band, same station, same hour, same awful incompetence.

So the princess had nothing to do with it!

Trainloads bristling with ragged soldiers passed us—open truck-loads of them, carriage tops covered with sleeping men, some were clinging to the steps and to the buffers.

Nish station had lost its sleepy air. Every one was energetically doing everything all wrong. The four orderlies and the two Belgian sisters were minus their passports. Some one had taken them away. These were run to earth in the station-master's office, and as the party had no idea where to go, we suggested they should come with us to the rest-house.

The first person we met there was Dr. Clemow.

"Have you got the Sirdar with you?" we asked.

He answered that he had brought Paul, the young Montenegrin interpreter, with him. The English units in Montenegro had been recalled, and he had come to Nish to try to rescind the order for his unit.

The town was at its gayest. The cloud had not yet dimmed the market. Peasants poured in, knowing nothing of the Bulgars, little thinking that they would be flying, starving, dying, in a few weeks' time. A Chinese vendor of paper gauds had come into the town, and all the pretty girls were wearing his absurdities pinned on to their head kerchiefs. One girl was so fine and bejewelled that we photographed her, to the delight of her lover, who stood aside to let us have a good view.

A man was selling honey in the comb accompanied by his bees, which must have followed him for miles. They testified their displeasure at his selling their honey by stinging him and most of the buyers.

No one seemed to know when the train was leaving. Station-master, porters, all had a different tale. At last we decided to risk seven o'clock in the evening, and the four orderlies and ourselves, copper tray and all, bade farewell to the Belgian sisters, who had cut off their hair, and wandered across to the station. The train arrived two hours

late and stood, ready to go out, guarded by tatterdemalions with guns.

"You can't get in yet," said one of them barring our way.

"Why?"

"Ne snam."

The freebooting instinct arose in us; we awaited our opportunity, dodged between two soldiers, and settled ourselves comfortably. Several officials looked in and said nothing; another came and forbade us to stay there, and passed on. An old woman came with a broom and cleaned up. We sat on our feet to get them out of the way, somebody squirted white disinfectant on the floor, and we were left in peace.

The train started at eleven, moved as far as a siding and stayed till four. We found the four Red Cross men had only nine shillings between them. Three had stood all the way from Salonika, as during an unfortunate moment of interest in the view their seats had been appropriated by a fat Serbian officer, his wife and daughter. The fourth, a porter from Folkestone, had settled down on the floor, saying "he wasn't going to concarn himself with no voos."

They had new uniforms, yellow mackintoshes, white kit bags, and beautiful cooking apparatus,

which took to pieces and served a thousand purposes.

In the chilly morning we got out at Stalatch, just too late for the Vrntze train. Luckily the station café was open.

The four Englishmen ordered beefsteak, but were given long lean tasteless sausages. They asked for tea and were given black Turkish coffee in tiny cups half full of grounds. We asked about the trains, and were told we should catch the one next day. We argued, and extracted the promise of a luggage train, which would soon pass.

Why is it that in Serbia they always, on principle, say, "You can't," after which under pressure they own, "Somehow you can"? In Montenegro they say, "Certainly you can," after which they occasionally find that "Somehow you can't."

At last the luggage train came. We sat on the step dangling our legs and peering down at the country below us.

We were again held up at Krusevatz and bearded the officials. They promised to put on a special carriage for us when the next luggage-train should come in, some time that evening.

Nothing for it but to lunch and to kill time. We watched the mountain batteries pass on their way to the Bulgarian frontier. One or two big

BIG GUN PASSING THROUGH KRUSEVATZ.

cannon trailed by, drawn by oxen. Many horses looked wretched and half-starved.

The Englishmen built a camp fire by the railroad. Soon tea was brewing; we drank, and chewed walnuts, stared at by crowds of patient Serbian soldiers.

We travelled with the treasurer of the district, a charming man who revelled in stories of a mischievous boyhood spent in a Jesuit establishment. The fathers had stuck to him nobly until he had mixed red paint with the holy water, and one of the fathers, while administering the service, had suddenly beheld his whole congregation marked on the forehead with damnatory crosses like criminals of old time. That ended his school days. He introduced us to an officer, whose business it was to search for spies, a restless man who was always feeling under the seats with his feet. Perhaps it was only cramp! The four Englishmen, cheered at the thought that their long journey was nearing its end, burst into song. The Serbs stood round listening to the melodies that were so different to their own plaintive wailings, and presently asked us to translate. We don't know if the subtleties of "Didn't want to do it," or "The little grey home in the west," were very clear in the translations, as they seemed puzzled.

Arrived at Vrntze, we found no carriages to meet us. The station-master at Krusevatz had promised to telephone, but as usual had not done it. We had to break the news to our Englishmen, who, their songs over, had naturally fallen into tired depression, and had to tell them that a three-kilometre walk was before us, and one man had better stay to look after the baggage. Carriages were telephoned for, but they would be long in coming.

They were! We arrived at the village—no carriages. We agitated. The spy searcher came out of the café—to which he and the "Bad Boy's Diary" man had driven—and made people run about. They said the carriages had already gone. We denied it, so they woke up the coachman.

We took the three men to the hospital and went back to sit in the café with our new friends and met many old ones. The local chemist cheered and promised us a present of mackintosh cotton to celebrate our return. We had spent Easter morning in his shop eating purple eggs and drinking tea enlivened with brandy, while the choir came in and chanted beautiful Easter songs to us.

An hour rolled by, the café closed, our friends disappeared. We went to meet the carriages from the station; at last they arrived, with Mr. Owen half asleep amidst the kitbags.

It was far into the night when we arrived at our hospital burdened with our two bags and the copper tray.

The night nurse, a kitten, and a round woolly puppy welcomed us.

CHAPTER XIV

MAINLY RETROSPECTIVE

Hospital work again. How strange we felt. A sad-faced little Serbian lady, widowed through typhus, was interpreting for the out-patients while Jo was away; but she was alone in the world and did not want to go—so Jo, homesick for her beloved out-patients, had to make the best of it and do other work. The Serbian youth who had been put on the staff as secretary, was dangerously ill with typhoid fever, which he had picked up at Kragujevatz. The typhus barrack was a children's hospital, containing little waifs chosen from the out-patients, and a few women.

In the early days when we had first arrived at Vrntze there were several overfilled Serbian and one Greek hospital. They were only cafés and large villas, unsanitary, stuffy, and overworked. The windows were never open, and through the huge sheets of plate glass could be dimly seen in the thick blue tobacco smoke a higgledy-piggledy crowd of beds. Often two men lay in one bed covered with

their dirty great coats, while typhus patients and wounded men slept together. One man lay unconscious for several days in the window, his feet in his dinner-plate. At last he died, his feet still in the dinner. Mr. Berry took on a hydropathic establishment which had been completed just before the first Balkan War. This was used as the central hospital, where the staff lodged, and the most serious surgical cases were nursed. In the basement an operating-room was rigged up, there were bathrooms, disinfecting-rooms, a laundry, and an engine-house, where gimcrack German machinery in fits and starts provided us with electric light and hot water. The village school on the hill opposite was annexed and cleaned by a sculptor, a singer, a painter, and a judge of the Royal Horse Show. This was run as a convalescent home, and was the cause of many a muddy sit down, as it lay on the top of a greasy hill.

Other large buildings were gradually added, sulphured, and cleaned until we had six hospitals, one of which was run for some time in connection with the Red Cross unit.

Typhus had not stricken the village badly, but the old barracks were full of cases which developed several days after each batch of wounded came.

The Red Cross unit took on the typhus barracks.

Mr. Berry, seeing that surgery was for the moment a secondary thing, and having received a batch of Austrian prisoners riddled with typhus, built some barracks not far from the school. Glass was unobtainable, so thin muslin was used for the windows.

The first precaution against bad air that Mr. Berry took in preparing his chief surgical ward was to smash all top panes of the windows with a broom, thus earning the name of the Window Breaker. Whenever the wind blew through the draughty corridors and glass rattled down from the sashes, word went round that " Mr. Berry has been at it again."

Our unit and the Red Cross ran a quarantine hospital together. It was originally the state café and lay in the park of the watering-place. Near by were the sulphur baths. We ripped out the stuffy little wooden dressing-rooms, to the joy of the bath attendant, who possessed the facsimile of Tolstoi's face, and with the *débris* we built a large shed outside for the reception of the wounded.

In the early days they came in large batches from other hospitals, pathetic septic cases, their lives ruined for want of proper care. We put their clothes in bags for future disinfecting, and the men, mildly perplexed, were bathed, shaved, and sent to the " clearing-house," as it was called.

Those who developed typhus went to the barracks, and the rest were drafted to the various hospitals in the village.

The clothes were first sulphurized to kill the lice, and then, until Dr. Boyle's disinfector appeared, boiled. This was important, as typhus is propagated by infected lice. Even forty-eight hours of sulphur did not destroy the nits. One day the sulphur-room was opened after twenty-four hours. Live lice were discovered congregated round the tops of the bags. Jan put some in a bottle. They immediately fought each other, tooth and nail, rolling and scrambling in a mass just like a rugby-football scrum, and continued the fight for twelve hours at least, thus proving that the scientific writer who says that the louse is a delicate creature and only lives a few hours off the body can know little of the Serbian breed.

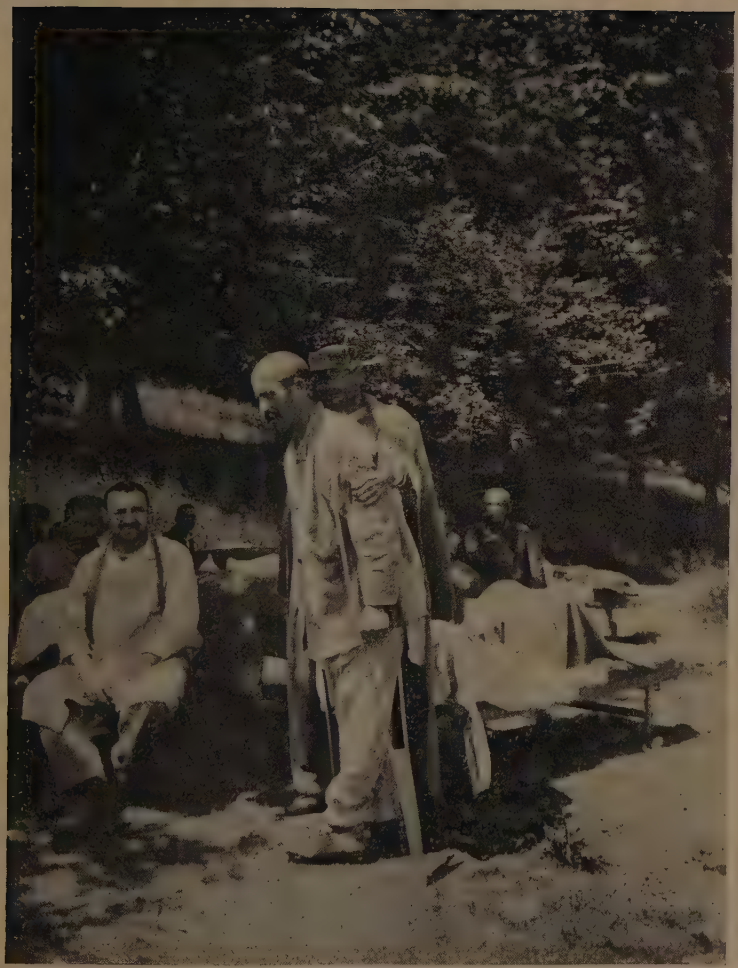
The town, when we arrived, was a bouquet of assorted and nasty smells, of which the authorities seemed proud. We cleaned up the streets by running a little artificial river down the gutter. Mr. Berry had the chief of the police sacked and instituted a sort of sanitary vigilance committee. We took over the local but very primitive sewage works—a field into which all the filth of the town was drained.

The slaughter-house was discovered. It was

an old wooden shed built over the lower end of the stream which washed the village from end to end, draining successively the typhus barracks, the baths, and all the hospitals. The shed itself was old and worm-eaten. The walls were caked with the blood of years, yet the meat was always hung against them after having been well soused in the filthy water. Mr. Berry decided to build a new one: some of the money was subscribed through Mr. Blease by the Liverpool Liberal Club; the rest Mr. Berry paid himself. At once the state began to quarrel with the commune as to the ownership of the proposed treasure. So the smells disappeared and the town engineer was furious, saying he would "Put all right" when we left.

Luckily one of the chief men in the town had lived in America and knew the value of cleanliness. Mr. Berry was offered an honorary Colonelcy; but he refused, saying he would prefer to be made sanitary officer for the town.

The spring came, bringing with it no fighting. A great offensive was expected, had been ordered, in fact, but we heard later that the army refused to advance. The work was very much lighter. Very few men were entirely helpless. The hospitals, which were still emptying themselves and whose men were coming to us, sent the survival of the fittest. Most of the beds were carried out under



IN-PATIENTS.

the trees after the morning dressings were done, and the men lay gossiping and smoking when they could get tobacco. Outside visitors were rare. The Serbian ladies do not go round the hospitals with cigarettes and sweets, and to find a Serbian woman nursing is an anomaly.

Report says that many flung themselves into it with energy during the first Balkan War, but that four years of it, ending with typhus, had dulled their enthusiasm. It is not fair to blame them. To nurse from morning till night in a putrid Serbian hospital with all windows closed requires more than devotion and complete indifference to life. Three Serbian ladies came to sew pillow cases and sheets every afternoon, and one of them gave up still more time to teach the patients reading and writing.

But the town was full, in the summer, of smartly dressed women, and the village priest never once visited our hospitals. Hearing of the English missions and their work, peasants began to come from the mountains around, and the out-patient department became, under Dr. Helen Boyle, a matter for strenuous mornings.

Many of these poor things had never seen a doctor in their lives. Serbia even in peace-time had not produced many medical men, and those who existed had no time to attend the poor gratis.

The percentage of consumptives was enormous. Every family shuts its windows and doors for the winter and proceeds industriously to spit, and so the disease spreads.

Diphtheria patients rode and walked often for ten hours and waited in the courtyard, and people far gone with typhus staggered along in the blazing spring sun.

One jolly old ragatops with typhus arrived in the afternoon with a violent temperature, and Jo settled him comfortably in the courtyard with his head on a sink until Mrs. Berry should come in to see about taking him into the barracks. He seemed quite happy about himself, but very worried about his blind beggar brother and his two half-blind children, whose sight had been ruined by smallpox.

For the latter nothing could be done.

Another time she kept two boys waiting to see if Mrs. Berry could take them into her typhus barracks. One had scarlet fever, and the other was a young starving clerk in a galloping consumption, thirty-six hours from his home.

Afraid to raise their hopes, and not knowing if there would be room for them, Jo told them that they were to have some very strong medicine that could only be administered two hours after a dose of hot milk and biscuit (the medicine was only

bovril). By this time Mrs. Berry arrived and managed to squeeze the boys in.

However, we were told to clear the hospitals, for the wounded were expected.

"What could be done with the scarlet fever boy?" At last an idea came: "The Mortuary," built by the Horse Show Judge with such joy. The mortuary that we had all gone to admire as a work of art.

But the scarlet fever boy did not seem to see it that way, for in the night he escaped, and we have never seen him since.

Diphtheria was so prevalent that the Red Cross on receiving a patient, gathered in the whole family for a few days, inoculated, washed, and gargled it. They also toured the villages around, digging out typhus and other infectious cases, thus stopping the spread of infection. They had a most energetic matron, Miss Caldwell, who had already nursed in Cettinje during the Balkan Wars, and we have already told how she managed the Montenegrins.

Often the patients came in ox-carts. Too ill to be lifted out, they had to be examined and treated in the carts. Dr. Boyle acquired a special nimbleness in jumping in and out of these contrivances armed with stethescope, spoons, bowls, and dressings. We accumulated a congregation of "regulars," who came to be dressed every day—gathered feet, suppurating glands, eczema, etc.

One old mother with a bad leg was bandaged up with boracic ointment and told to come back in two days. She came. Jo undid the bandage. All the old lady's fleas had swarmed to the boracic till it looked like a fly-paper. After which we used Vermigeli.

All wore brightly woven belts, sometimes two or three, each a yard and a half long, tightly wound round their bodies, thus making their waists wider than their hips. One girl was black and blue with the pattern showing on her skin, and many men were suffering from the evils of tight lacing.

The village priest received belts as fees from the peasants when he married them. He sent us a message to say he had some for sale, so we went in a body to his house, were received by his daughter, who looked like a cow-girl, turned over a basketful of belts, and bought largely. After which he put up the price.

Jo went on night duty for the first time.

A queer experience this, starting the day's work at half-past seven in the evening and finishing at seven in the morning—breakfasting when other people are dining ; hearing their contented laughter as they go off to bed ; and then a queer loneliness and the ugly ticking of a clock. One creeps round the big ward. What a noisy thing breathing is.

Some one groans, "Sestra, I cannot sleep." This man has not been ordered morphia. Silence once more broken only by the sound of the breathing, distant howling of dogs from the darkness or the hoot of an owl. The old frostbite man coughs; he coughs again insistently. Both say "Yes" to hot milk. So down to the big kitchen, some mice scutter by, the puppy wakes up and thinks it is time for a game. A woman's voice calls loudly, "Sestra." Taking the milk off, Sestra hurries across the courtyard and along the corridor to the little rooms with the puppy tugging at her skirt. The woman wants water; she has wakened the other women—they want water. When silence again comes back into the ward, one notes instinctively the vivid colouring of the two big blue windows at the far end, the long lines of beds disappearing into the darkness, the dim light of the lantern on the table showing up the cheap clock and a few flowers. The intensity of light upon this clock is only equalled by the intensity of one's thoughts upon the clock. The minute-hand drags on as though it were weary with the day's work. A groan ticks off the quarters and cries for water or milk the half-hours. At last one o'clock. Time for a midnight meal. Eggs and cocoa hurriedly eaten without appetite in the kitchen, but breaking the monotony. Back to the ward again, one of

the patients very restless, in great pain. Poor fellow, he has had a long and hard time of it, fifteen months in bed and all due to early neglect.

"Sestra," he says, "sestra," and holds out a handkerchief heavy with coin. "Tell the doctor to take me down to the operating-room and cure me or not let me wake up."

Between four and five there is more movement in the ward. Groans give way to yawns. In the windows the blue is paling to grey. Cocks are crowing now quite close, now faintly, like an echo. Suddenly the world is filled with work, "washings, brushings, combings, cleanings, temperatures, breakfasts, medicines, some beds to make, reports, all fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle, until at last the day-sisters come and relieve, and yawning at the daylight one eats warmed-up dinner while the others are having breakfast."

After a seven weeks' absence one was bound to miss many old friends in the ward. Some had gone home, others were back in the army. Old Number 13, the king of the ward, was still there. He had a dark brown face and white hair, and was furious if any dared to call him a gipsy.

"I am a respectable farmer," he said, "and I own seventeen pigs, a horse, and five sheep, a wife, and two children."

He loved to tell of his wedding. It was done

in the correct old Serbian style. He went with his mother and a gun to the chosen one's house, where she was waiting alone, her parents tactfully keeping out of the way. They abducted the lady, who was treated with great honour as a visitor in her future father-in-law's house.

"Father" turned up next morning. Rakia was served, and father divulged ceremoniously how many pigs he could spare to them for keeping his daughter.

Number 13 wanted to know everything: how old was Jo, how much she was paid?

"What, you are not paid?" he said in amazement. "Then the English are wonderful! In Serbia our women would not do that."

Poor little John Willie still left a blank, though he had died long before. His name was not John Willie, but it sounded rather like it, so we just turned it into John Willie. He loved the name, and told his father about it.

They sat all afternoon hand-in-hand, saying at intervals, "Dgonn Oolie," and chuckling.

Jan once had brought back from a spring visit to Kragujevatz some horrible sun hats.

They were the cast-off eccentricities of the fashions of six years ago, and had drifted from the Rue de la Paix to this obscure Serbian shop which was selling them as serious articles of clothing. Jo

tried them on, and one of the nurses became so weak with laughter that she tumbled all the way downstairs.

Finding them quite impossible, Jo bequeathed them to the ward, where they were snapped up enthusiastically.

The ugliest was an immense sailor hat, the crown nearly as wide as the brim, but the head hole would have fitted a doll. However, John Willie fancied that hat and was always to be seen, a tiny, round-backed figure, wandering slowly in a long blue dressing-gown, blue woolly boots, and the enormous hat perched on the top of his pathetically drooping head.

One day poor little John Willie became fearfully ill. His parents arrived and sat dumbly gazing at him for two nights, while he panted his poor little life away. His friend the Velika Dete (big child), once a fierce comitaj, was moved away from the "Malo Dete," to make more room, and he sulked, while the Austrian prisoner orderlies ran to and fro with water for his head, milk, all the things that a poor little dying boy might need; and old Number 13 passed to and fro shaking his head, for he had been long in hospital and had seen many people die.

A man with knees bent (he said with scroogling them up all winter in the cold) was put in John

Willie's place. The Velika Dete came back, but he would not speak to "Bent Knees" for weeks.

By this time the Austrian prisoners were very well trained and made excellent orderlies in the ward. An ex-Carlton waiter was very dexterous in sidling down the ward: on his five fingers a tray perched high, containing dressing-bowls and pots bristling with forceps, scissors, and various other instruments.

His chief talent lay in peppering frostbitten toes with iodoform powder—a reminiscence of the sugar castor.

Our housemaid was a leather tanner, whom Jo's baby magpie mistook for its parent, as he fed it at intervals every morning. A Czech in typhus cloths spent his days down in the disinfecting, operating and bathrooms. He had been an overseer in a factory and had added to his income by writing love-stories for the papers. A butcher was installed in the kitchens. Once a week he became an artist, killing a sheep according to the best Prague ideals.

All our prisoners, about forty in number, clung to the English hospitals as their only chance of life, for in other places sixty per cent. had died of typhus.

The Serbs, though bearing no animosity, could do little for them. We saw the quarters of some

men working on the road. These were show quarters and supposed to be clean. Each room had an outside door. On the floor was room for six men and hay enough to stuff one pillow. They had no rugs, and the Serbs could give them none. The cold in the winter must have been intense.

We had come back to this little world after seven weeks' wandering, and almost immediately Jan had gone off to Kragujevatz with a broken motor.

While he was away Jo got letters from England and Paris, which made her realize that things were rather in a mess, and we should have to go home. We had left England intending to stay in Serbia three months, and had been then nearly nine.

CHAPTER XV

SOME PAGES FROM MR. GORDON'S DIARY

October 2nd. Got a wire from Kragujevatz to say that the motor hood is ready and that we must go over to get it fitted. We cleaned and oiled the car, and at two ran it down the hill, but it would not start. Found two sparking plugs cracked and the magneto very weak. When we had fixed it up it was too late. Four a.m. to-morrow morning.

October 3rd. Started in the dark, Mr. Berry, Sister Hammond, Sava, I, and a female relation of some minister or other who wanted to go to Kralievo. The motor working badly, as it is impossible to get the proper spare parts. Three young owls were sitting in the middle of the road scared by our headlights; we hit one, the other two flew away. Sava and I stopped and tinkered at the old machine for about an hour, changed all the sparking plugs again, after which she went better. We reached Kralievo without incident, where we cast loose the female relation. From Kralievo passed over the Morava, which was pretty

floody and had knocked the road about a bit. The road led right through the Shumadia country, where the first revolts of the Serbian nation against their Turkish oppressors were engendered. We passed the old Serbian churchyard. I never passed by without going in. These queer old tombstones all painted in days when pure decoration had a religious appeal, these tattered red and white and black banners lend such a gay air to death; these swords and pistols and medals carved into the stone seem almost carrying a bombast to heaven. On one side of each tombstone is the name of its owner, preceded by the legend, "Here lies the slave of God." Do slaves love their masters?

When we passed this road in the winter, black funeral flags hung from almost every hut, and even now the rags still flap in the breeze. A Serbian boy, clad in dirty cottons, shouted to us, making gesticulations. We slowed down and stopped.

"Bombe," he cried. "Aeropla-ane. Pet," he held up five fingers, "y jedan je bili slomile. Vidite shrapnel."

He pointed. We saw a quiet, early autumn landscape, the blue sky slightly flecked with thin horizontal streaks of cloud. Any scene less warlike could not have been imagined.

"Vidite tamo," he cried once more.

Straining our eyes one could just see, between

the lowest strata of cloud, a series of small white round clouds floating.

"Shrapnel," said Sava, pointing.

"They hit one," said Mr. Berry.

I let in the clutch, we sped on once more. Bang! a tire burst.

Motor driving in Serbia is not a profession, it is an art. We were on another of these first-class Serbian roads. Presently we came to a long downhill.

"That is the place," said Mr. Berry to Sister Hammond, "where we spent the night last winter when the motor stuck in the mud. There, beneath that tree."

We shrugged our way down the hill, and presently came into the gipsy environments of Kragujevatz.

A man stopped us, holding up a hand.

"Bombe," he said.

We got out. In the soft earth at the side of the road was a neat hole, four inches in diameter. Peering down we could see the steel handle of the unburst bomb. We next passed a smashed paling, in the garden behind a crowd were searching for relics. An old woman had been killed, they said. We turned into the main street and plunged into a large crowd. The pavement had been torn up, and people were grubbing in the

mud; pieces of charred wood were passed from hand to hand.

"That's a bit of propeller," said one. "No; it's a bit of the frame," said another. A girl proudly held up a large piece of map scorched all round the edges.

"And the men?" we asked.

"Nemachke (Germans)," answered the crowd; "both dead; one here, one over there," pointing to the middle of the road.

We came into the Stobarts' camp, pitched up on the hill behind the Kragujevatz pleasure ground.

"Did you see the aeroplanes?" they cried, running towards us.

"No," we answered; "but we saw the shrapnel."

"One was hit—it was wonderful. They were flying just over here, and a shrapnel burst quite close; and then one saw a thin stream of smoke come from the plane; then a little flicker. It seemed to fall so slowly. Then it burst into flames and came down like a great comet."

"D—n!" we said: "if only that machine had been working right yesterday."

We took our car down to the arsenal, and I left Sava to take it to bits and get it opened out, for there had been a bit of a knock in the crank case. The remains of the smashed aeroplane were piled

in the yard, and from the way it had twisted up without breaking one could see from what beautiful metal the machinery was made. Some of the French experts denied that the guns had hit it—giving as their reason that one of its own bombs had exploded. But one of the engineers put his hand into a big hole which was beneath the crank case and drew out a shrapnel ball. I thought that would settle it, but the Frenchmen were not convinced. The shells were bursting fifty metres too low, they said. Fifteen bombs had fallen about the arsenal, and one man, a non-commissioned officer, had been killed.

Met Hardinge and Mawson: they both saw the aeroplane fall, and were not fifty yards from the place where it struck.

Walked back to the Stobarts' camp for lunch. A French aeroplane had come over from Belgrade too late ; now it rose slowly in the air and sailed off. Saw the two dead aviators; both had evidently been killed at once, for they were charred, not blistered.

Colonel Phillips, ex-Governor of Scutari, and English military attaché, came up with the Italian attaché. A bomb had fallen just before the colonel's house and missed his servant by a hair's-breadth. The Italian was in a room opposite the Crown Prince's palace ; he thought that the falling

machine was going to crash through the roof, but it fell in the street not ten yards away. The camp itself was packing hard, for Mrs. Stobart had just decided to form a "flying field ambulance."

Mr. Berry and I had a tent assigned to us.

October 4th. Awoke to sounds like some one hitting a board with a mallet. Ran outside. One found the aeroplane from the little clouds of shrapnel, for it was flying very high, and was like a speck. Clouds of smoke were rolling from one quarter of the town, and we thought that a big fire was beginning, but it was extinguished. Another aeroplane came later. The guns began long before it could be seen. It dropped two bombs over the powder factory, and two in the town. Mrs. Stobart ordered everybody from the camp; but nobody left except the patients, who were driven a mile out and dumped in a wood. A long procession of townsfolk filed continuously by, running from the danger. The aeroplane dropped two more bombs in the town, and came back flying right over the camp. It was a queer feeling, staring right up at the plane, and wondering if another bomb were not falling silently towards one.

I went down to the arsenal to see about the car; and Mr. Berry and Miss Hammond went off to see the anti-aircraft guns. Mrs. Stobart had

asked me to go out on the Rudnik road to see a car which had broken down, and had promised to send a motor to fetch me. Before we could leave, news was brought that another aeroplane had been telephoned. Presently we could hear the guns beginning. Hardinge turned up, and we looked out for the machine. We saw the aeroplane coming straight towards us; everybody rushed for the cellars, but I wanted to stay outside for the last moment. Hardinge was with me. Suddenly I lost sight of the plane. I ran farther out to look for it, and suddenly there was a report, and a great column of smoke just outside the arsenal. There was another behind the rifle shops, and another behind the boiler sheds. Now the aeroplane was overhead. I heard a noise like tearing silk, and lay flat upon the ground shouting to Hardinge—

"Lie flat, d—n you!"

It seemed ages before it burst. Dust and bits flew everywhere; the windows all sprang out into the yard. I looked for Hardinge, but he was unharmed. I had expected to be terrified, but I was feeling so bothered about Hardinge that I had no time to think about myself.

We heard a shrill crying, "Oh—h! oh—h!"

I ran forward, crying to Hardinge, "A man's hurt!" He answered, "Is he?" The dust was

so thick I could not see at first, but as it cleared I found a workman lying on back and elbows, his knees drawn up as though he were trussed; his head waved from side to side, and he was uttering spasmodic cries. I said to him, "Where? where?" and he placed a hand to his stomach.

The man had been struck just below the ribs by a large piece of bomb, blood was welling from the wound, so I pushed his shirt into it, and ran back to the office. Mrs. Stobart's car had been brought by a lady and a youth named Boon, who had both taken cover in the cellar; so I dug up the girl, whose name I have forgotten, as I hoped she knew "first aid." Together we ran to the man, leaving Boon to bring the ambulance. "Bandages," we demanded. "Haven't any," answered the few Serbs who had gathered round; "the first aid house has been blown to pieces." We crammed our handkerchiefs into the place, and a cotton-wool arm pad which was brought, and we then took off the man's own puttees and tied him up with them. As we were doing this somebody cried—

"Aeroplanes returning."

Immediately every Serb and Austrian fled. The girl, Hardinge, and I were left alone. It was a false alarm. With the returning crowd came a large man, who was weeping.

"Oh, my poor brother! oh, my poor brother!

BROKEN AEROPLANE IN THE ARSENAL AT KRAG.

WHERE THE "PLANE" FELL.

HOUSE NEAR THE ARSENAL DAMAGED BY BOMBS.

What have they done to thee? Why should this evil have befallen thee?"

As we finished tying him up, Hardinge said, "Is it any good lying down?"

I answered, "If this poor chap had been lying down he would not have been hurt."

There was no stretcher, so we lifted the wounded man on a blanket into the ambulance, which Boon had now brought. The girl and the brother climbed within. I took the steering wheel. Boon wound up the engine, and swung alongside me. The driving was a difficult problem. Whether to drive fast and get to the hospital, or whether to go slow and spare the wounded man as much pain as was possible? The road was awful: once it had been laid with stone pavement, but many of the stones were missing, and in so bad a condition was it that although several bombs had fallen in the streets, one could not distinguish the bomb craters from the ordinary holes in the road. At last I decided that as it was not a fracture I would go as quickly as I dared. Above the clatter of the machinery I could hear the weeping of the brother and the intermittent cries of the wounded man, "Water, water."

"I think he's going," said the girl through the curtains.

At last we reached the hospital. We laid the

man on the ground and the doctors did all they could. But it was useless, the piece of shell had cut in directly beneath the heart. In ten minutes he was dead. I turned to the brother and laying both hands upon his shoulders said—

"Your poor brother was too badly hit. We could not save him."

He stared at me for a moment, not understanding. Then he turned and flung himself down upon the body, weeping more bitterly than before.

I went to the ambulance and took it back to its place.

The aeroplane returning from the arsenal had flung three gratuitous bombs at the camp itself, one had fallen in the Serbian hospital yard, and had killed an Austrian prisoner; one had fallen in the top corner of the camp field, but had not exploded. The third had missed, only by a little, the room in which the two dead German aeroplanists were lying, had plunged into the Stobarts' storeroom, and had burst in the last case of marmalade which they possessed. It was an awful mess. Had it fallen three yards to the left it would have killed the chief cook, who was just on the other side of the wall.

I went back to the arsenal. None of the bombs

had struck any important part, almost all had fallen in open places, though one had burst on the roof of the woodshed, only a few yards from the petrol store. Two cans of petrol had been punctured by bits of shell, and Austrian prisoners were hurriedly pumping them out. Almost half the work of the arsenal was done by Austrian prisoners. Another bomb had fallen in the horseshoe store, and inside horseshoes were everywhere, some even sticking in the beams like great staples. I had no idea before that the bombs had such force. Sava said he had been standing in a doorway and a bomb had exploded quite close, a piece had whizzed by his nose and had torn down the name board over his head. When he turned round to go on with the work the aide had fled and never appeared again.

I met Dr. Churchin. He is one of the best Serbs I have yet met, a philosopher. He was looking after the English units in Kragujevatz and I learnt did it excellently, and with a devotion to his duties altogether unusual. He told me that I had been nominated an honorary captain; but I am under the impression that it is an honour I cannot by national law accept.

We went in the afternoon in the car towards Rudnik to examine the one which had broken down. I soon saw that nothing could be done

on the spot, and ordered it to continue its "bullocky" progress to the camp. In the evening went off to the Government motor school, where I found my old friend Ristich and Colonel Derrock; both these men are first-class Serbs—jolly, keen and friendly.

October 5th. Our car not being finished, Mr. Berry and Sister Hammond went back to Vrntze in a car lent by Colonel Derrock. I was to stay till all the repairs were completed on ours. There was another scare of aeroplanes, and the whole town emptied itself, families pouring by en route for the country; but the planes did not come. I went down to the arsenal and got on with the repairs. Dr. May lent me her camera and I got some photos. Mrs. Stobart went off with her "flying field force," taking with her nearly all the men and almost all the cars: if the hospital get many serious cases I imagined that they would be dreadfully shorthanded.

In the night the two German aeroplanists were buried without military honours. The Serbs said that they were assassins and deserved nothing. Still, Kragujevatz is an arsenal.

October 6th. Another aeroplane scare; town emptied itself once more. Dr. MacLaren and I rushed off to the anti-aircraft guns, hoping to get some photos; but nothing occurred. Got the

Rudnik car running by taking Mr. McBlack's useless car to pieces. In the evening two sisters went to Uskub. One of the sisters went to get her bag, and I took what I thought to be a short cut to help her. I passed between the tents, and was striding along, when—Plop! I found myself swimming in a deep tank of water. The sister heard me fall, and ran back to the camp crying out—

"Help, help! The stranger is drowning in the bath-water sewage tank."

I clambered out, and hastily fled to my tent, where kindly souls brought me an indiarubber bath and hot water. I also got some refugee pyjamas, in which I wandered about for the rest of the evening. My clothes were taken to the kitchen and hung over the big stove.

October 7th. Went to the arsenal in borrowed refugee clothes miles too large. Worried the car till it worked. At lunch clothes dry. Got away by three, Hardinge coming with us. Night came on before we got home. Our car is a beastly nuisance in the dark, the lamps, electric and worked from the magneto, only giving light when going at full speed, which is impossible on these roads. I was just boasting to Harding that I had never run into anything except the owl, when I hit a cow. Figures appeared cursing from the darkness;

we cursed back for allowing the animal to stray; other figures appeared cursing on our side. The motor was pushed back, the cow got up and walked off, and on we went. Found Jo on night shift. Got some supper, fixed up a bed for Hardinge, and so self to bed.

CHAPTER XVI

LAST DAYS AT VRNTZE

Up till now Vrntze was undisturbed by the war; the fine ladies were walking the streets much as usual, and were bringing pressure upon Gaschitch, the commandant, to make us close one of our hospitals, so that it might be reopened as a lodging-house. The chemist and Jan had an amusing conversation about the uncle of Nicholas I. It seems he was a great poet.

"Sir," said the chemist, earnestly, "I can assure you that he was one of the greatest poets that ever has lived. Were Serbian a language as universally spoken as is English, he would stand beside Shakespeare in the world's estimation, if not before. The depth of his philosophy, sir, it is astounding and so deep. There are passages in his poetry which I have studied for weeks on end and never yet been able to understand."

The true explanation is that the great poet translated an old work of German philosophy into

Serbian, and very likely did not understand all the original himself.

We got more letters urging us to return. Our studios in Paris and all our work of the last eight years seemed in danger of being sold up. So Jan went once more to the Chief. He asked us to stay until at least the first batch of wounded arrived, for none of the others had had experience of the receiving arrangements, and of the disinfecting. We moved our beds and baggage to the school, which Jo was to take over as a convalescent hospital.

By the way, one of our doctors had a queer soothsaying experience. She was told that she was one day going to a foreign country with an S in the name. She would be quite safe in her first job, but that she would be offered a post in a large grey building from which if she accepted she might not escape alive, but in any case would be flying for her life, and that she and all her companions would suffer great hardships and sleep on dirty straw in awful places. She was offered a job at the Farmers' hospital in Belgrade. She refused. It is a great grey building, and we now heard that Belgrade was being violently bombarded and all had to escape. Rumours came of great German attacks on Shabatz and Obrenovatz.

The next day Serbian refugees arrived from

Belgrade itself: they said that the town was in flames and that fierce fighting was taking place in the streets. Posheravatz was deserted, and a great battle was raging about its outskirts. There were reports that the King of Bulgaria had abdicated and that the Germans at Chabatz had been defeated, leaving 8000 prisoners in Serbian hands. Neuhat came to Jan in great glee.

"We have captured a German major," he said, "and he says that never was there a soldier like the Serb. He has fought English and French and Russians, but he says our troops are the most wonderful of all."

"Jolly sensible chap," said Jan. "I'd say the same myself if I was a prisoner."

Major Gaschitch told Dr. Berry that if the Serbian army retreated we were to retreat with them. Blease and Jan got hard at work putting rope handles to the packing-cases and labelling them for special purposes. One of our lady doctors was valued in the morning. In the outpatient department a question arose about marriage. A Serb patient said—

"I can marry any time I like. Pah! In Serbia one can get two maidens for twopence, and three widows for a mariasch ($\frac{1}{2}d.$)."

Everybody was now running about with maps, violently explaining the situation to everybody

else, and all explaining differently. Major Gaschitch had fixed Novi Bazar as our probable haven, and Mr. Berry borrowed our map to see if there were a direct road over Gotch mountain, and suggested that Jan might get a horse and ride over to see. Alas, only a fourth-class road was marked, and heaven knows what that may be like: lots of country and choose for yourself probably. A woman was brought in with what she said was a bullet through the breast; it occurred during the celebration of the marriage ceremony, which lasted a week. The girl was brought by her father, the bridegroom having rushed off to the church to pray. The wound looked very like a dagger thrust.

The new slaughter-house was a fine erection. The walls were almost finished and the roof was being assembled. One of the Austrian prisoners had discovered a talent for stone carving, and Miss Dickenson was designing a frieze for the door and on each side. There was a fine ceremony—while we had been away—at the foundation, and Mr. Berry made a speech in Serbian. The disinfector had also arrived and was soon got into working order.

The news got better. The Austrians were now driven out of Belgrade with immense slaughter, the whole line of the Danube and of the Save had

been reoccupied by the Serbs. Blease and Jan wondered if it were necessary to go on with the rope handles. Our first wounded man arrived in the evening, a non-commissioned officer, with a slightly wounded thumb. He had arrived by train, asked in the town which was the most comfortable hospital, and had walked up. We represented that we weren't looking for thumbs, but had to put him up for the night; this meant the whole business of washing, shaving, and disinfecting his clothes.

We heard that the French and English had arrived in Nish, 70,000 men, and that they had been greeted with the wildest enthusiasm; but against that was set the fact that Belgrade after all was not quite clear of Austrians, in fact, they still held half the town, but that the "Swobs" were not getting on at Chabatz. "Swobs" in Serbian are any of a Germanic country, while in Austria it is a term of opprobrium, meaning "German." One of our "Czech" orderlies said to Jo, pathetically—

"I never thought that I should be called a 'Swob.'"

Next day came a warning that two hundred wounded, serious cases, were to be expected, so everything and everybody was in a rush. The bathrooms to be cleaned, disinfecting-room and

bags to be got ready, wards cleared as much as was possible.

The wounded did not come, and the next day they did not come. The chemist said that all the Austrians had been driven back, but that the Bulgars had at last attacked. Mr. Berry thought the news rather serious, and told us that Gaschitch had said that we must be prepared to move at twenty-four hours' notice; so back we went to the work on the boxes. Next day news was brought that the Bulgars had drawn back, and had said that the Serbs had attacked them first, that the Powers had declared war on Bulgaria, and that the Russians had bombarded Varna.

At last we got news that the wounded were really coming. We hurried into our disinfecting garments—looking like pantaloons,—and scissors were served out to all the assistants. It was dark before the first motor load came.

The undressing-room was a large white-stone floored room with four long plank beds covered with mackintosh; behind was the bathroom. The first wounded man was pushed in through the window on a stretcher, a brown crumpled heap of misery, and groaning. We laid him carefully on the bed while the doctor searched for the wound. While she was examining him a second was handed in. No need to examine this one. Bloody head

bandage and great blue swollen eyelids told plainly where his wound was. We stripped the clothes as carefully as was possible from the poor fellows. Those who were too bad to go to the bathroom were washed where they lay. One orderly with soap and razors shaved every hair from each; and several plied clippers on the matted heads. Outside was one electric lamp which threw strong lights and darker shadows, making a veritable Rembrandt of the scene, lighting up the white clad forms of the assistants who were drawing out the stretchers, the big square end of the ambulance car, and picking out from the gloom of the garden a rose tree which bore one white rose.

The wounded were indescribably dirty, and their clothes in a shocking state, all stiff with blood. Jo took charge of the clothes bags, seeing that no man's clothes were mixed with any others. The men all seemed dazed, each soldier seemed to have the same protest upon his mind. "This wasn't the idea at all, I was not to be wounded. Why am I here?" One suddenly felt the brutal inanity of modern warfare; one felt that if the ones who had started this war could only be forced to spend three months in a war hospital, receiving and undressing the fruits of their plots, they would have a different view of the glory and honour of battle.

Each man had sewn in his belt some talisman to protect him from danger—small brass or lead image or medal, bought from the village priest.

There was confusion at first, for almost all were new to their tasks; the barbers were carrying stretchers when they ought to have been barbering; the clippers were scrubbing instead of doing their proper work; but, nevertheless, it was marvellously rapid. The motor tore back to the station, and by the time it had returned its first load had been washed, shaved, arrayed in clean pyjamas, and either lay in bed in the ward, or were waiting their turn outside the operating theatre.

Mr. Berry was hard at work: there were several cases shot through the brain, one through the lungs, one through the heart, and one through the spine; this latter was paralysed.

Some wounded came in carriages; it was very difficult to get them on to the stretchers without giving them unnecessary pain, because of the shape of the "fiacres." At last all were passed through.

Do not think us heartless if we rubbed our hands and said, "Some very good cases, what!" for emotional pity can be separated from professional pleasure, and if these things had to be we were pleased that the serious ones had come to us; had not gone to a Serbian hospital.

Next day we sorted clothes. Every uniform had to be taken from its bag, tabulated, searched for money or food, and repacked. They were swarming with vermin, but we wore mackintosh overalls which are supposed to be anathema to the beasties. More operations. One of the men had been hit in the cerebellum, and was quite blind. The boy who had been hit in the lungs prayed for a cigarette and an apple, he felt sure they would do him good. We sorted more clothes. One of the men had a pocket full of scissors—evidently regimental barber; another's pockets were crammed with onions; a third had a half-eaten apple, as though the fight had surprised him in the middle of his dessert. The cerebellum man wanted his purse. We could not find it; after exhaustive inquiry found that the lung youth had stolen it. Another patient claimed he had lost thirty-six francs; so down we had to go once more, search his package—the smelliest of the lot—and at last found the money pinned into the lining of his coat, also a watch. Jan took them back to him, wound up the watch and set it. The grateful owner said that the watch was an ornament, but that he could not read it.

The French were never in Nish at all—all lies; but Austrian aeroplanes had bombed it and killed several people. The Bulgarian comitaj cut the line at Vranja, but had been badly beaten in a

battle near Zaichar. The flight over Gotch degenerated into a joke, and Jo was commissioned to do a caricature of it.

Suddenly a refugee turned up, the hostess of the rest house in Nish. She was very worried about the loss of her fifteen trunks, which she had had to leave, and which contained all her family mementoes and miniatures. She hoped that the scare would only last a few days. The Bulgars had occupied Veles though, which was bad news. Another refugee lady from Belgrade came in. More patients. Forty-nine for the "Merkur" hospital. Lots of running about, but at last all were bedded.

A Serbian comitaj girl came in in the afternoon, looking for a lady doctor. She was a fine upstanding creature with a strong, almost fierce, face. There had been six of her, she said, but one had been killed. The bombardment of Varna turned out to be a lie, but they said that all the Bulgars at Vrnja had been surrounded. Major Gaschitch also said that if Serbia could hold out till the 10th, something wonderful was going to happen.

Our visitors had rather a hard time. One of them was trotting into the little sitting-room of the hospital. She opened the door and started back aghast. There was a man within clad in

nothing but a large pair of moustaches. She fled. Mr. Berry having nowhere to examine a stray patient had occupied the room at an unlucky moment. More wounded were expected, so we got into our war paint, and they arrived five hours later than we had expected them. They came in "fiacres," and climbed off very easily. We inquired, "Where wounded?" "Belgrade." "When?" "Three months ago." Not a serious case amongst them, and we had heard that the badly equipped hospitals at Krusevatz were crowded with the most frightful cases. We were furious. A lot more wounded came to the "State" café. None seriously hurt, and after examination one man had no wound to show at all, nor shock, nor anything. He had simply run away. There were several hand cases, some blackened with powder, proving that the poor devils had shot themselves to get out of it. One man would not have his hair cut because he said that he was in mourning for his brother, and his hat was decorated with a crown of black lace. At the same time some serious cases came to the main hospital; one man seemed to have been shot the whole length of his body, the bullet entering at the shoulder and emerging behind the hip. A small boy sat scratching. Jo said to him, "Why dost thou scratch?" He answered with a shout

of fatuous content, " I have lice, I have lice," and scratched once more.

The disinfector was working overtime, clothes were poured upon us from all the other hospitals. Another alarm that wounded were coming, but they never came. In their place an English clergyman arrived from Krag. News came of the fall of Uskub, and that Lady Paget had been captured with all her staff. Next day the wounded came, many more than had been expected. Jan got rather strong signs of inflammatory rheumatism threatening, so he went to bed for a couple of days with salicylate.

The Serbian authorities were beginning to lose their heads. In the morning they said that the " State " was to be made into a hospital for officers, and chased all the patients out; in the afternoon they decided that it was not, and chased back the patients—who had been divided amongst the other hospitals. Thus they kept us busy and accomplished nothing. In the evening another batch of wounded came in.

Nearly all the reports of the previous week were now confessed to be lies. A Serbian minister had been dying in the town, and the good stories were made up to keep him cheerful. Now he was dead the truth leaked out. The Austrians and Germans were advancing on every side, the Serbs making

no resistance since Belgrade. The Bulgars had occupied the whole of the line south of Nish. The French and English were advancing with extreme difficulty. The Farmers' unit trailed into the town, no conveyance having been arranged for them from the station. The Scottish women were already here, having come in the night; they had to sleep twelve or fifteen in a room. Next day a small contingent of the wounded Allies arrived.

Sir Ralph Paget arrived in a whirl. Leaders of units appeared from all sides, and a hurried conference was held.

Mr. Berry called a meeting at two. He said Paget had announced that the game was up; that all members of units should have the option of going home, and that he (Paget) was going to Kralievo to see about transports. Jan got to work on the map, and decided that the best route out would be one to Novi Bazar, and thence by tracks to Berane. There were villages marked in the mountains which did not seem so high as those by Ipek, also the road, if there were one, would be at least two days shorter.

Sir Ralph came back next day, and knowing that we had but lately returned from Montenegro, he asked Jan a lot of questions about the road, etc. Sir Ralph's latest decision was that all men of military age—not doctors—should attempt to cross the mountains into Montenegro. He could

not say if any transport could be provided, or if there would be any means of escaping from Montenegro, and in consequence he advised no women to move, as they would be better where they were, than in facing the risks of the mountains; they would not be in the same danger as the orderlies, for whom internment was to be expected. Dr. Holmes decided to accompany us, as he said he wasn't going to doctor Germans, and he might be useful to the retreating Serbian army. Ellis also said that he would come and would bring his car, which would help us at least some of the way. Sir Ralph asked Jan to take charge of the party of the English Red Cross, and we went back to our rooms to repack, for Jo had already arranged things for internment. Mr. Blease decided to come with us. Nobody knew what the dangers would be, or where the Austrians and Germans were, and many doubted if it were possible to get through. The season was getting late, and snow was daily to be expected. Some imaginative people enlarged on "the brigands" and "wolves," but we did not think that they counted for much. The chief problems were, if we could get shelter each night, and could we carry enough food to support us in case we could get none, which seemed very possible.

We got an order from Gaschitch for bread from the Serbian authorities. We were going off into

country, the real conditions of which nobody knew, and our friends took leave of us, many expecting to see us back in a few days. The Austrian prisoners were very sad at our going.

The station was dark and gloomy, the little gimcrack Turkish kiosk—like a bit of the White City—was filled with Red Cross stoves and beds. Two trains came in, but neither was for Kralievo; one was Red Cross and the other for Krusevatz. A lot of boys, in uniform, clambered on board and shouting out, "Sbogom Vrntze," were borne off into the night. Our spirits fell lower and lower. We thought of the friends we were leaving behind us, and of what we had before us. The reaction had set in, intensified by the gloom and cold of the station.

Hours later the train arrived. The only third-class carriage was filled to overflowing, people were standing on the platform and sitting on the steps. We tried the trucks. All were crammed so full that the doors could not be opened.

"You'd better go to-morrow," said the station-master.

"We're not going through that a second time," we said. "Can't we climb on to the roof?"

We scrambled up. There were other men there, lying in brown heaps. We made some of them move up a little, stowed our blankets and knapsacks, and sat amongst them.

"Are you all right?" shouted the station-master.

"Yes."

"Good-bye, then. Lie down when you come to the bridges, or you'll get your heads knocked off."

We lay down at once, taking no risks, not knowing when the bridges were coming. Luckily the wind was with us, and the night was warm. The engine showered sparks into the air, which fell little hot touches on to our faces and hands. Later a little rain fell.

Kralievo at three a.m. We did not know the town so Jo stormed the telegraph office. The officials tried to shut the door, but she got her foot into it.

"When I ask you a polite question you might answer it," she said.

"You can get shelter next door," said one grumpily.

We tried next door. It was crowded, and the heat within was unbearable. We saw a door in the opposite wall and opened it—back into the telegraph office. There were people sleeping there already, so without asking permission we dumped our baggage and lay down on the floor. The officials said nothing.

After a while two French generals (or somethings) came in. They were refused as we were, but they took no notice, unpacked their blankets and lay

down under the great central table. With them was a wife, she sat miserably on a chair. The room got so stuffy when the door was shut that she wished it opened; the draught was so bad when the door was open that she immediately wished it shut. Unfortunately she got mixed: the Serbian for open is very like the word for shut, and she used them reversed. There was much confusion. Just as the officials were getting used to her inversions, she corrected herself. More confusion. An English girl came in, pushed aside the papers on the big table, and began to brew cocoa on a Primus stove which she had brought with her. The officials looked helplessly at each other. Jan recognized her as one of the Stobart unit from Krag: she had got astray from her band, but was now rejoining them.

CHAPTER XVII

KRALIEVO

We roused ourselves at seven a.m. A damp, chilly fog was hanging low over the valley, it penetrated to the skin, and one shuddered. The railway was congested, but train arrived after train, open trucks all packed with men whose breath rose in steam, and whose clothes were sparkling with the dew. We stepped from the station door into a thick black "pease puddingy" mud, as though the Thames foreshore had been churned up by traffic. Standing knee deep in the mud were weary oxen and horses attached to carts of all descriptions, with wheels whose rims, swollen by the mire, were sunk almost to the axles. Across the mud, surrounded by shaky red brick walls, the District Civil Hospital showed pale in the morning, and we made towards it, splashing.

We came to the lodge: an English girl was doing something to a kitchen stove. She stared at us.

"Hullo!"

"We've just come from Vrnjatchka Banja," we explained.

She took Jo to the hospital, while Blease and Jan dropped their heavy luggage and washed in a basin, provided by a Serb servant girl. Jo did not return. Jan went to the hospital to look for her.

Crowds of men were at the door, crowds in ragged and filthy uniforms, with bandages on arms, or foot, or brow, dirty stained bandages with bloodstains upon them. Some of the men were crouching on the ground, some were lying against the house, fast asleep. Somehow we got through them. The passage was full of men, and men were asleep, festooned on the stone stairs. The smell was horrible. Beyond a swinging glass door Scottish women were hurrying to and fro bandaging the men as they entered, and passing them out on the other side of the building. The Serbs waited with the stoicism of the Oriental, their long lean faces drawn with hunger, pain and fatigue. Now and again some man turned uneasily in his sleep and groaned. A detachment of "Stobarts" had found a lodging upstairs, in a bedroom with plank beds; amongst them we found some old friends.

Leaving them we went into the village to look for a meal, back through the mud. Soldiers, peasants, women, children, horse carts and bullock waggons, all were pushing here and there, broken

down and deserted motor cars were standing in the middle of the road. In the great round central "Place" confusion was worse, animals, carts, and refugee bivouacks being all squashed together on the market place.

White-bearded officers with grey-green uniforms were gesticulating to white-bearded civilians outside the Café de Paris. A motor rushed up, disgorged three men in Russian uniform and fled. A small fat man vainly endeavouring to attract the attention of a staff officer grasped him by the arm; the staff officer shook him off angrily. Soldiers lounged against the walls and peered in through the dirty windows. . . .

Within, the big dark room was crammed. Opening the door was like turning a corner of cliff by the seashore. Almost all, at the tables, were men: officers, tradesmen, clerks, talking in eager tense words. We found three seats. Nobody had anything to eat or drink. Three men came to the table next to us. They exhibited two loaves of bread to the others, and had the air of some one who had done something very clever. We were famished.

Suddenly half the café rose and rushed to a small counter almost hidden in the gloom of the far end. Coffee can be got, said some one. Blease, who could get out the easier, went to explore. In a short while he wandered back saying that he had got a

waiter. A man came through selling apples. We bought some. At last the waiter came.

"Café au lait," said we.

"And bread," we added, as he turned away.

"Nema," he answered, looking back.

"Well eggs, then."

"Nema."

"What have you got?"

"We have nothing but meat."

"No potatoes?"

"No."

We got a sort of Serbian stew, the meat so tough that one had to saw the morsels apart with a knife and bolt them whole. As we were operating, a soldier leaned up against our table, and stared at our plates with a wistful longing. Jo caught his eye. She scraped together all our leavings; what misery we could have relieved, had we had money enough, in Serbia then.

We paid our bill with a ten dinar (franc) note. The waiter fingered it a moment.

"Haven't you any money?" he asked.

"That is money."

"Silver, I mean."

"No."

He hesitated a moment. Then went away, turning the note over in his hands. After a while he returned and gave us our change.

The day passed in a queer sort of daze of doing things; between one act and another there was no definite sequence. The town itself was in a sort of suppressed twitter, everybody's movements seemed exaggerated, the eager ones moved faster, impelled by a sort of fear; the slow ones went slower, their feet dragging in a kind of despondency. At one time we found ourselves clambering up some steps to the mayor's office, in search of bread. By a window on the far side of the room was a man with a pale face, eyes red-rimmed from lack of sleep, and light hair: Churchin. We ran to him.

"What are you doing here?" he said gloomily.

We explained.

"I don't think you can get any transport," he said; "but later I'll see if I can do anything."

We thanked him. "But transport or no transport, we are going." Jan showed him the bread order. He read it and pointed to the Nachanlik.

The Nachanlik read our order, scowled and passed it on to another man, an officer. The officer read the order, looked us sulkily from head to foot, then he pushed the paper back to us.

"We have only bread for soldiers."

"But—we are an English Mission."

"Only for soldiers here. We have nothing to do with English Missions."

Fearing that we had come to the wrong place we retired.

At another time we were climbing up back stairs to what had been the temporary lodgings of the English legation. But it was empty and deserted; Sir Ralph Paget had not yet come.

There were bread shops, but they were all shut and guarded by soldiers. Jan saw some bread in a window. He went into the dirty café, which was crowded with soldiers, some sitting on the floor and some on the tables.

"Whose bread?" asked he.

"Ours."

"Will you sell me a loaf?"

"We won't sell a crumb."

We bought some apples from a man with a Roman lever balance, and chewed them as we went along.

At the hospital the "Stobarts" were packing up. A motor was coming for them in the afternoon. We heard that Dr. May and the Krag people were at Studenitza, an old monastery, halfway along the road to Rashka. On the flat fields behind the station were another gang of "Stobarts," the dispensary from Lapovo. One Miss H—— was in trouble, for thieves had pushed their arms beneath the tent flaps in the night and had captured her best boots.

"There are cases full of boots on the railway," said some one, consoling.

"But those are men's boots," said another.

Part of the morning we spent sitting on the banks of the Ebar River and watching the bridge, wondering if Ellis would come with his car. Ten times we thought we could see it, and each time were deceived.

The French aeroplanes came in. They hovered over the town seeking a flat place, finally swooping down on to the marshy plain on which the "Stobarts" were encamped. They landed, dashing through the shallow puddles and flinging the water in great showers on every side. As each landed it wheeled into line and was pegged down. Behind them was a line of cannons, the Serbian engineers were hard at work, smashing off their sighting apparatus, destroying the breech blocks, and jagging the rifling with cold chisels. Some of the cannon were Turkish. All the morning, through the noise of the town, the shouting of the bullock drivers, the pant of the motor cars, and the steady tap, tap of the engineers' mallets, came the faint booming of the battle at Mladnovatch, not fifteen miles away.

After lunch we went again to the café. Again it was full, and we were forced to wait for a table. Just as we sat down a woman with a drawn, anxious

face came up to us, clutched Jo by the arm and said eagerly—

"Is it true that you are going to Montenegro?"

"Yes," answered Jo. "If we can get there."

"Could you give me only a little advice, madame? You see we do not know what to do. My husband—he is an old man, and he is an Austro-Serb. If the enemy catch him they will hang him."

"I'm afraid he will have to walk," said Jo.

"But he is so old," said the woman, with tears in her eyes; "he is fifty."

"We ourselves will have to walk," said Jo. "Make him a knapsack for his food. Give him warm clothes. It is his only chance of safety. And," she added, "the sooner he gets away the better, for in a little all the food on the road will be eaten up, and one will starve."

The woman thanked us. "I will make him go at once," she said, and ran out wringing her hands.

A Russian woman with a thin-faced man sat at her table.

"You are going to Montenegro?" she said.

We nodded.

"I too am going. I am a good sportswoman. I have walked fifty kilometres in one day."

We looked at her well-corseted figure, her rather congested face, and had already seen thin high-heeled shoes.

"I will come with you, yes?"

The little man interrupted. "Why do you say such things, Olga? You know that you cannot walk a mile."

We pointed out that we were going to march across the Austrian front, and that no one could tell us where the Austrians were exactly; that our safety depended to some extent on our speed, and that the failure of one to make the pace meant the failure of all. The little man drew her away.

In the afternoon a miserable fit of depression took us, but we pushed it behind us. To the hospital for tea, taking with us a tin of cocoa and some condensed milk, which the people lacked. Biscuits and treacle, the treacle looted from the railway, where an obliging guard had said that he could not give permission to take it, but that he could look the other way. We heard the tale of Kragujevatz, of the camp and all the buildings filled to overflowing. More aeroplane raids; and of the sudden order to evacuate. All the wounded who could crawl were got from their beds and turned into the street by the authorities to go: if they could not walk, to crawl. A few Serb and Austrian doctors were left to guard and watch those too ill to go; with them some Swedish and Dutch sisters, and the Netherlands flag flying from the hospitals. Dr. Churchin seemed to have been the good genius

of the Missions, never flagging in his efforts for them.

We heard that a Colonel Milhaelovitch was the bread officer. He lived somewhere in the back of the big yellow schoolhouse at the end of the street. After tea we wandered drearily down to seek him, gained permission from a sentry, and clambered up some stone stairs. Jan saw an acquaintance from the Nish ministry, asked him a question, and was ushered . . . straight into the Ministry of War. They seemed in a frightful stew about something, an air of disorder reigned everywhere, but somebody found time to look at the order.

"Nachanlik," said he.

"We've been there already."

"Well, go there again and say we sent you, and that they must give you bread."

We were worn out by this. Jo went off to the plank bed which the Stobarts had promised to her, while Jan and Blease to the tents, where Sir Ralph's men were sheltering.

All the streets were edged with motionless bullock carts, in which men were sleeping, and even in the mud between their wheels were the dim forms of the weary soldiery. The two splashed across the marsh and found the tents.

Rogerson and Willett were there; Willett was seedy. Another Englishman named Hamilton,

who had an umbrella which he had sworn to take back with him to England. Also two Austro-Serb boys who had been acting as interpreters.

West and Mawson were not there. Rogerson said that Sir Ralph had sent them with Mrs. M—— to see the road and conditions at Mitrovitza; nobody knew when they would be back. We got two beds, but there were no mattresses on the springs. Jan rolled up in his Serbian rug, but it was loosely woven, and not as warm as he had hoped. Just not warm enough, one only dozed. About eleven o'clock, Cutting came in with Owen, Watmough, Hilder, and Elmer. They had come from Vrnjatchka Banja with Dr. Holmes. Some one had told them that we had deserted them and had gone off to Rashka on our own; they were cheered to find us still there. After that we lay awake discussing details. None of them had realized the difficulties of the road and the probable lack of food, though the Red Cross men had brought with them a case of emergency rations. Jan exposed his idea of the route; somebody said that there was some corned beef and rice in a Red Cross train on the siding.

Intermittently in the silences one could still hear the sound of the guns.

Next morning at breakfast Dr. Holmes came in. He had thought us gone, and so had procured for

himself and the sister who was with him, seats in a Government motor which was going to Mitrovitza. We all splashed across the marshy grass to the siding where the stores were. In the empty trucks on the line families were camping, and some had fitted them up like little homes. We found the truck, and with efforts dug out twelve tins of corned beef, a case of condensed milk, one of treacle, and two tins of sugar. We emptied a kitbag and filled it with rice.

The hospital was fuller than ever. The Scottish nurses were toiling as quickly as they could, and each man received a couple of hard ship's biscuits from a great sack, when his wounds were dressed. He immediately wolfed the hard biscuits and lay down; in one minute he was asleep, and the hospital grounds were strewn with the sleeping men. From time to time sergeants came in, roused the sleepers, formed them into detachments, and marched them off.

The Stobarts met us wringing their hands. There was no bread, nor could they procure any. Jan took their order, and we promised to see what could be done. As we passed the station we saw surging crowds of men, from the midst came cries of pain, and sticks were falling in blows.

"Good Lord, what's that?" we cried.

We plunged into the crowd. Some of the men

and boys were gnawing angrily at pieces of biscuit which they held in their hands. The crowd surged more violently, the sticks were plied with greater vigour; presently the crowd fell back snarling. The ground which they left was covered with the crumbs of trampled biscuit, and the soldiers drove the crowd yet further back, beating with sticks and cursing. A bread sack being unloaded from a waggon had burst, the hungry crowd had pounced . . . that was all. As we withdrew we saw the fortunate ones still gnawing ferociously at the hard morsels which they had captured.

We took our passes to the mayor once more. He received us angrily.

"I told you yesterday," he said.

"The War Office sent us," said Jan, sweetly, "and said that you must give us bread."

"I have no bread," said the mayor. "You must go to Colonel Milhaelovitch."

We tramped back to the yellow school. There was no sentry, and a queer air of forlornness seemed to pervade. We asked a loiterer for the colonel's office. He pointed. We climbed yet another stair and found a pair of large rooms; they were empty. Town papers were scattered on the floor, one table was overturned.

A man lounged in. "Where is the colonel?" we asked.

"Ne snam bogami," he said, twisting a cigarette.

"Well, find out," said Jan.

He lounged away and presently returned with another.

"The colonel has evacuated," said the other; "he went naturally with the Ministry of War to Rashka last night."

We went back in a fury to the mayor.

"You knew this," we cried angrily to him.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Where can we get bread?"

He took up the passes and looked at them. His face lightened.

"This one," he said, turning to another, "is written—Give them bread to the value of three francs. We will give them three francs."

"No you won't," said we; "you'll give us bread. You cannot leave these English sisters to starve."

After some grumbling he said we could inquire at the "first army." We made him write out an order; we also made him give us a clerk to accompany us. He gave us a tattered old man whose toes were sticking from his boots.

We presented both orders at the "first army." It refused at once. We threatened it with the War Office and with the mayor. After some

demur it sent us across the town again to the "magazine" office.

At the magazine office we were more wily. We presented our little order for three humble loaves. He first said "Nema," then admitted that there was bread and that we could have it. We then showed the order for the other loaves.

"No, no," he cried, "you cannot have all that bread."

We pointed out that it was not much for a whole mission. He still refused. So Jo got up and made a little speech. It was a nasty little speech, but they deserved it, for we had found that they had bread.

She pointed out that the English Missions had now been working in Serbia for a year, gratis; that no matter if we got no transport we were going to get to England, and that it would not look well in the English papers if we wrote a true account of our experiences, saying that they had allowed the English Missions to starve. The threat of publicity finished him. He grumbling consented to give us ten loaves in addition to our own to last for two days. Not daring to leave them, and to send an orderly for them, we rolled them up in Jo's overcoat and staggered down the road to the hospital.

On the way we met an old Serbian peasant woman. She walked for a while with us, turning her eyes to heaven and crying—

"What times we live in. Only God can help, only God."

At the hospital we met Sir Ralph Paget. He told us that the Transport Board had promised him ten ox carts for the morrow. Two large motor lorries had turned up to take the two contingents of the "Stobarts." They were packing in, and we asked them to take our holdall as far as Rashka, for we were still distrustful of the ox carts. We had begun to get into a habit of not believing in anything till it was actually there.

An Englishman came suddenly in with a face purple with anger and swearing. He was the dispenser from Krag who had been left at Lapovo to bring on the stores.

"What's the matter?" we cried.

"Brought my motor from Lapovo with the hospital stuff," he said furiously. "Left it out there on the road. Came in here to tell you about it; and when I go back the cussed thing isn't there. Found all the stores in a beastly bullock cart. The people said that a Serb officer had come along, turned all our stuff out, and gone off with the motor. * * * *."

There was nothing to be done, so we went on packing. An aeroplane was seen in the distance; everybody watched it.

"Taube," said somebody.

The Taube sailed slowly round, surveying the town. It passed right overhead. Everybody stared upwards wondering if it were going to "bomb," for we were just opposite to the railway station. But it passed over and flew away. As it went guns fired at it, and many of the Serbs let off their rifles. We have often wondered where all the bits of the shells go to, for nobody ever seems to be hit by them, even when they are bursting right overhead.

The motor gave several snorts, everybody climbed aboard. The driver let in the clutch, there was a tearing sound from underneath, but the motor did not go. One of the drivers clambered down, and after examination said that it could not go on that day, and they immediately began to take it to pieces. The aeroplane came back twice, sailing to and fro without hindrance.

It is impossible to describe properly the feeling in the town: it was like standing in the influence of high-pressure electricity, even in the daytime the soldiers in their rags—but with barbarously coloured rugs and knapsacks—were sleeping in the hedges and gutters. There were vague rumours that Rumania and Greece had finally joined in; many seized upon these statements as being true, and one found little oases of rejoicings amongst the almost universal pessimism. We ourselves doubted

PEASANT WOMEN LEAVING THEIR VILLAGE.

SERB FAMILY BY THE ROADSIDE.

the reports. Sir Ralph's ox carts—in an interview with Churchin—dwindled down to a possible two; but Jan got a letter in the evening saying that there were ten country carts for the next morning. Six were for us and four for the "Stobarts," and that we were to take the Indian tents with us.

We went back to the tents early to get a good start next day. Rogerson and Willett were sorting their clothes. Hamilton had decided, as he could not walk, to go back to Vrntze with the Red Cross stores which Paget was sending to the hospital. As we were turning in, Dr. Holmes arrived. He had not got the seat in the motor, but was going next day. Later two mud-bespattered figures came in. They were West and Mawson.

We questioned them eagerly, and although they were worn out they answered all they could.

The road was passable. They had scarcely slept for four days. Mitrovitza was already crammed with fugitives, and rooms were not to be found. On the way back the motor was working badly; the mud was awful. Then the petrol ran out. They stopped a big car which was loaded with petrol and ammunition, and asked for some. They got a little, and as they were going to start the big car suddenly burst into flames: some fool having struck a match to see if the petrol was properly turned off. Great flames roared up

into the air, and it was a long time before the car was sufficiently burnt down to pass it.

West said that it was a most marvellous picture.

A little farther on a tyre had burst, and they had been forced to come back on the rims. They eagerly welcomed Jan's idea of the Novi Bazar route, feeling sure that if they once got to Mitrovitza it would be long before they got away, and very doubtful if they could get lodging there.

Again we could hear the guns in the night, and news had come in that Krag had been occupied and that the German cavalry were making towards Kralievo.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FLIGHT OF SERBIA

The men were up before three-thirty to strike the tents, having slept but little. Breakfast was prepared and waiting at five-thirty in the big hospital bedroom; but the women ate of it alone.

Jo sallied forth to the camp, anxious to know what had happened. She found a testy little company. For two hours they had been struggling in the dark with tents and waiting for the carts and for a policeman, as all the riff-raff of the town was gathering to loot our leavings.

At last the carts were run to earth standing outside the hospital in a line—ten little springless carts in charge of a stupid-looking corporal who had misunderstood his orders. He moreover refused to move, saying he "had his orders."

The indefatigable Churchin was found, and sent him off with a flea in his ear. When he arrived at the camp we found a woman and household luggage in one of the carts. He said it was his wife, and objected to our putting anything into

that cart. We told him he would have to lump it, and he got sulky; as each extra package was put on a cart he said that it would break to pieces. Certainly the tents were very heavy, but we had been ordered to take them. When the carts were loaded up to the last degree they moved slowly through the mud and drew up at the hospital. We were sadly overladen. Our party consisted of Mawson, West, Cutting, Rogerson, Willett, Blease, Angelo, Whatmough, Elmer, Owen, and Hilder—the last four being our friends of the railway journey from Nish. We were thirteen. Temporarily with us also were the two little Austro-Serbian boys. The other four carriages were occupied by a doctor and three members of the Stobart unit, two "Scottish Women," their orderly and a Russian medical student who had been a political prisoner.

Leaving the town was a slow business, as it was being evacuated. Our little procession proceeded very slowly. Most of us walked. Jo drove with two of the Stobarts, watching from a seat of vantage the packed masses of people who wormed their way in and out between the ox carts. The road was blocked by some gigantic baking ovens on wheels. Hundreds of boys, big seventeen-year-old boys with guns, and little limping fellows from thirteen to sixteen, wearing bright rugs rolled over their shoulders, were dragging along in single

file. Their faces were white, and their noses red, sergeants were beating the backward ones along with a ramrod. One of them said—

"I have eaten nothing for three days—give me bread." We had no bread, but we discovered some Petit-Beurre biscuits, and left him turning them over and over.

The whole town buzzed: motor cars, surrounded by curses, insinuated their way through the crammed streets; whips were cracking, men were quarrelling but all had their faces turned towards the road to Rashka, which we realized would be as full as at straphanging time in the Tube. The boys passed us, then we passed them. They passed us again. Hundreds of Austrian prisoners were being hurried along, goodness knows where. Neat young clerks, suit case in hand, elbowed their way through the crowd. Young staff officers were walking, jostled by beggars. Jo called to an old man who was driving a cart full of modern furniture, his face drawn into wrinkles of misery—

"Where are you going?"

"Ne snam," he answered, staring hopelessly before him.

Wounded men were everywhere, tottering and hobbling along, for none wanted to be taken prisoners. Some had ship's biscuit, which they tried to soften in the dirty ditch water, others

were lapping like dogs out of the puddles. Sometimes a motor far ahead stuck in the mud, and we had to wait often half an hour until it could be induced to move. Gipsies passed, better mounted and worse clad than other folk, some of them half naked. Many soldiers had walked through their opankies and their feet were bound up with rag. Why in this country of awful mud has the opankie been invented? It is a sole turned up at the edges and held on by a series of straps and plaited ornamentations useless in mud or wet, which penetrates through it in all directions.

We arrived at an open space and halted for lunch. Water had to be fetched. It trickled from a wooden spout out of the hill and before our cooking pot was filled we were surrounded by thirsty soldiers, who were consigning us to the hottest of places for our slowness. Cutting displayed a hitherto buried talent for building fires. We unpacked the food and soon a gorgeous curry was bubbling in an empty biscuit tin with Angelo, Sir Ralph Paget's chef, at the spoon. A leviathan motor car lurched by containing all that was left of the Stobart unit. Another monster passed, piled with Russian nurses and doctors. A face was peeping out at the back, eyes rolled upwards, moustaches bristling. Was it? Yes, it was—"Quel Pays"—but he did not recognize us.

THE FLIGHT OF SERBIA.

The baking ovens appeared again, and we felt we had stayed long enough. Some of our party were very fagged after their various adventures since leaving Nish, so they climbed on to the carriages wherever there was a downhill. The road wound up a narrow stony valley down which was flowing a muddy stream. The trees on our side of the river were still green, on the other bank they were bright orange, blood red and all the tints of a Serbian autumn. The road full of moving people was like another river, flowing only more sluggishly then the Ebar itself. For us in future, the autumn will always hold a sinister aspect. These trees seemed to have put on their gayest robes to mock at the dreary processions. At intervals by the roadside sat an ox dead beat and forsaken by its owner as useless.

Dusk came, bringing depression; the travellers on the curly road looked like mere shades. Coat collars went up and hands were pocketed. Little camp fires began to twinkle here and there on the hillsides. We came to a large open space where many fires blazed, respectfully encircling a French aeroplane section. Opposite was a high peak topped by a Turkish castle. There we wished to halt, but the corporal said we must push on, as he wished to get food for the horses. After we had passed the castle the dusk grew rapidly darker and the

road narrower and more muddy. Although camp fires twinkled from every level space, the never ending stream of fugitives seemed to grow no less. Darkness only added to the tragic mystery of the flight. The bullock carts poured along, the soldiers crowded by.

A horse went down, the owner stripped the saddle off, flung it into a cart and cursing stumbled on into the darkness. The carts following took no notice of the poor horse but drove over it, the wheel lifting as they rolled across its body. We shouted to the owner; but he was gone, so we turned one or two of the carts off, and made them go round. But we could not stay there all night. The horse was too done, and too much injured by the cruel passage to move, so Jan reluctantly pulled out his "automatic" and, standing clear of its hoofs, put two bullets through its brain. It shuddered, lifted two hoofs and beat the air and sank into a heap.

On we went progressing for mile after mile in the mire, but never a house did we see, nor a spot to camp on. At last the corporal gave up the quest for hay, and we were faced with the problem of spending the night on a narrow road bounded on one side by cliffs beneath which ran the Ebar, and on the other by an almost perpendicular bank. The night was black, the mud a foot deep, and a

stream ran across the road. The carriages drew up in single file and we discussed the sleeping problem, while Cutting cooked bovril on an ill-behaved Primus stove. Our drivers had to sleep on the carts. The women also had carts to sleep in; and the Scottish women offered Jo a place in their already well-filled carriage. The men were fitted somehow into the rest of the carts, while Jo, Jan, and Blease found a ledge below the road, and though it was very squelchy, they spread a mackintosh sheet and rolled up on it in their rugs.

No sooner were they really settled and sleeping than a voice said, "You'll have to get up: an officer says the carriages must move on—the King is coming." It was West. We sat up. Between us and the dim lights of the carts the black shadows of the crowds passed without end.

"I'll go and talk to them," said Jo; and unrolled herself, struggled and fumbled with her boots and floundered into the blackness, where a mounted officer was delivering orders. Shouts could be heard, lights waved, horses whinnied, splashing their feet in the puddles as they were being violently pulled here and there, and our poor little carts were moving ahead into obscurity. Jo told him they were a Red Cross party—that the carts were small, and couldn't they stay where they

were? The officer inspected the poor little carts, made his best bow, and said, "Yes, they can stay."

But the corporal did not listen to Jo's orders. He belonged to a country which rates women and cattle together, and the carts moved relentlessly on. With difficulty Jo found the ledge again on which Jan was sitting with the rugs, talking to the scenery in a manner which was not pretty.

Blease came up, and the three of us shouldered the things and stumbled off to find the vanished carriages, which were half a mile down the road. Jan flung his baggage on to somebody and soundly boxed the corporal's ears, calling him a "gloop." Instantly the corporal felt that "here was a man he could really understand," and from that moment became a devoted adherent, studying our slightest whim, and at intervals humbly laying walnuts before us.

A man came up to Jan.

"I believe that man is drunk," said he; "I said that your carts might stand."

"Who are you?" said Jan.

"I was once the conductor of the Crown Prince's orchestra," he said; "now I am traffic superintendent. It is difficult. I had a horse, a jolly little brown horse, but he gave out and I had to leave him behind on the road." There were tears in the

man's voice. "He was a good horse, but it was too hard for him. Now I have to walk."

"I shot your horse," said Jan. "They were driving over its body."

"He was a nice horse," said the man again, "a nice horse, and now I have to walk. Well, good-bye, you can rest here."

He splashed away in the mud.

Our new sleeping place was worse: the mud was deeper, the road narrower. Jo tried to escape the mud and made for the roadside, but the ground moved under her and some muttered curses arose. She was walking not on grass but on crowds of sleeping boys, and very nearly trod on a face. We settled down again on our mackintosh sheet but did not sleep. Some soldiers were firing off guns and throwing bombs into the river all night. Near us lay Owen, who coughed for a couple of hours, after which he gave up the spot as being too wet, and lay in a cart on Whatmough's face.

It rained, Jo had the fidgets, and Jan expostulated. The mackintosh was too small for us and we got gloriously wet. It is a curious feeling—the rain pattering on one's face when trying to sleep. By the time one becomes accustomed to the monotony of the tiny drops—*splash* a big drop from a tree. Water collects in folds of hat or rug, and suddenly cascades down one's neck.

At four in the morning the corporal crept up submissively to ask if we might move on, as the horses were cold and hungry. Only too glad, dark as it was, we rolled up our damp bundles and put them in the waggons with the sleeping people, who awoke, pink-eyed and puzzled at the sudden progress forward of their uncomfortable beds. Whatmough, who was convinced that the bombs and gunshots of the night before were spent Austrian shells sailing over the hill, said—

"That's the first time I've ever liked a fellow sleeping on my face."

One of the Stobart nurses, who had used the remains of the hay as a pillow, had been awake all night trying to prevent a hungry horse from eating her hair along with the hay. With determination she had donned a Balaklava helmet and trudged along all day in it, even later when the sun came out. Blease, too, started the chillsome dawn in a Balaklava wearing shawlwise a rug that had been made of bits of various coloured woollen scarfs. Jan used as a protection from the rain Jo's white mackintosh apron filleted round his head with a bit of string and dangling behind with a profusion of tapes and fasteners.

Under his khaki great-coat and about a foot longer he wore a white jaconet hospital coat. Jo had a pair of roomy ski boots into which she had

fitted two pairs of stockings; one had been knitted for her by a Serbian girl, and they were so thick and hard that no suspender would hold them up, so they stood, concertinawise, over the boots. One of our drivers, a witch-faced old man, had a dark red cloak with a peaked hood; and West having lost his hat had donned a Serbian soldier's cap, which he was taking away as a curiosity. His arm was giving him pain. It was very red and inflamed and no one knew what was the matter with it.

We travelled for an hour or so, and then everything on the road came to a standstill—something was in the way. Half an hour passed, nothing was done. Several miles of drivers were talking, gesticulating, and blaspheming; so Jan took on the job of traffic superintendent, and after a time, with a little backing here and twisting there, the problem was solved and we moved on. Still no hay stations could be found, and we were also hungry, having had no breakfast. We passed a mound covered with thousands of Austrian prisoners waking up in the twilight. Another hill was black with boys. Still no station. Then we saw some haystacks being taken to pieces by various drivers. Our ten coachmen ran to the stacks and came back with loads of hay which they packed in the carts. In five minutes the haystacks existed no more.

"Better not leave that good hay for the Swobs," said the corporal, as he whipped up the horses. We passed a dressing-station. It was a sort of laager of ox carts over which flew the red cross. Wounded soldiers were sitting and lying on the grass everywhere, while doctors and nurses were hurrying to and fro with bandages and lint.

Water was difficult to find. At last we stopped at the top of a hill in a furious wind. The water which we got from a stream looked filthy, but we boiled it thoroughly in a biscuit tin, and Angelo again presided over a magnificent curry filled with bully beef, while we hit our toes on the ground to keep warm. A wounded soldier was brought up by a friend. He had not been attended to for days, and we did the best we could for him.

A carriage passed laden with two tiny boxes—a policeman on either side. Although the boxes were small the carriage seemed so heavy that the horses could scarcely drag it, and two well-dressed men who were riding on the carriage often had to get out and push. We wondered if the boxes were filled with gold. The dreary processions of starving boys shuffled up again; some were crying, some helping others along, one had an English jam tin hanging round his neck. Sir Ralph Paget appeared in a motor car, loaded with packages and three

other people. We stopped him, and he told Jan that at Novi Bazar he could get no information of the path which Jan suggested, and added that he advised us to come to Mitrovitza. The Scottish women were to give up the idea of a dressing-station in Novi Bazar and to stop at Rashka. The Serbs had told him that there was a good chance of Uskub being retaken, in which case we could all go comfortably to Salonika by rail. In the other case, there were three roads out of the country from Mitrovitza, which he thought better than trusting to one road, if it existed.

Jan told him that the carriages were giving way under the strain of the tents, two of the axle struts having broken; and he suggested that if we did not jettison the tents, some of the carriages would probably never get as far as Rashka. Sir Ralph told him to do what he thought best.

So we pitched the two heavy tops and the long bamboo poles overboard, keeping the sides.

"Oh, what are you doing with our tents?" said one of the Scottish nurses.

This was complicated! We understood the tents were Sir Ralph's.

All the men swore they were Sir Ralph's tents, they had seen them at Nish. The "Scottish Woman" said she knew the tents well, and they

had cost £50 each. The men from Nish still claimed the tents, and said that war was war and they had left thousands of pounds' worth of stores, tents, etc., and had been obliged to discard even motor cars.

"And very extravagant it was of you," she said.

Jan pointed out that if we did not leave the tents we should very shortly have to discard both tents and carts, which would be even more extravagant.

She reluctantly cheered up, and we drove away in the sunshine. Before we turned the corner we could see an excited mass of soldiers, peasants, and boys rushing to the tents with their clasp knives. Perhaps, as coverings, they saved many people's lives on the cold nights to come.

More and more exhausted oxen were to be seen lying by the roadside. A huge cart drove over one. We all arose in our seats, horrified—but the old ox was all right, still chewing the cud. Over the cliff lay the smashed remains of a cart—its owners were flaying the dead horse. A peasant with bowed head led his cart past us. Drawing it was one ox—its partner was in the cart, lifting its head spasmodically—finished. Quantities of carts passed us filled with furniture, baths, and

Retreating Ammunition Train.

luggage. A smartly dressed family was picnicking by the roadside, sitting on deck-chairs. Colonel P—— and Admiral T—— slipped by in a shabby little red motor. They stopped and told us they were going to Rashka. It was good to see English faces again. A familiar figure went by. It was the brave young officer from Uzhitze. We gave a lift to a footsore lieutenant, who laughed as we trudged in the mud.

"Ah, English and sport," he said.

Crowds were congregated round a man who was carrying over his shoulder a whole sheep on a spit and chopping bits off for buyers. On a hillside a woman was handing out rakia. We thought she was selling it, but were told that it was a funeral and she was giving rakia to all who wanted it. Starving Austrian prisoners rushed for a glass and were not refused. The Crown Prince passed, touching his hat to fifty kilometres of his people. This time we were not going to be caught by the darkness, so we stopped near a village at half-past three. The sides of the two tents made good shelters for us. They were set up, looking like two long card-houses, and we used bits of canvas for flooring, very necessary, as it was so wet. Our fires were quickly made with superfluous tent pegs, and the rice bag was again drawn forth. A groaning soldier with bloodstained bandage asked

us to help him. His arm had not been dressed for some time. The doctor with us at first thought he had better not be tampered with; but finally agreed to look at his wound, which was bleeding violently.

She tore up a towel and bound him up tightly. He said he was going to Studenitza, a long day's walk, though he was nearly fainting.

On the hill opposite was a huge encampment of boys. As the darkness grew all disappeared but the light of the fires. It looked like an ancient battleship with the portholes on fire. We slept, the women fairly comfortably, but the men were overcrowded.

Heavy rain came on and poured through the top of the card houses.

"Now I know what the men suffer in the trenches," said a very young girl, when she awoke in a pool of water.

"Guess you don't—they'd call this clover," said a sleepy voice.

Looking our oddest we trudged off in the gloom and wet of next morning, leaping across rivulets of water which hurtled down the roads. West's arm was worse, Willett was recovering from a bad chill, Mawson had not yet got a decent night's rest for a week—every one longed for a house.

"Dobra Dan," said a voice. It was the friend of the wounded man we had bound up the first day.

"Where is your friend?" we asked.

"I lost him," he answered.

We climbed for three hours then waited, blocked. A military motor had stuck deeply in the mud and the wheels were buzzing round uselessly, so we helped to dig her out. Every one's inside cried for breakfast, and when at last we found a swampy plain, Whatmough and Cutting flung themselves upon an old tree trunk and cut it up for firewood.

We always had "company" to these picnic meals, hungry soldiers, mere ragbags held together by bones, crept around us and learnt for the first time the joys of curry and cocoa.

As we came round the corner into sight of the town a large block of temporary encampments stretched away beyond the river to our left. Beyond them was a flat plain on which was a large tent with a red cross painted over it. High behind the town towered a grey hill on which was a white Turkish blockhouse, for though where we were driving had always been Serbia, Rashka lay just on the boundary. We drove into a narrow street, presently coming to a stop where two motor cars blocked the way.

The Commandant from Kragujevatz, who had promised transport to all English hospitals, was standing on the road. He seemed very flustered and bothered lest we should want him to do something for us. We assured him we wanted nothing except bread, for neither we nor our drivers had had bread for three days. The colonel shrugged his shoulders and made a face.

"You might get it perhaps at the hospital."

Another officer, in a long black staff coat, laughed. He pulled a hard biscuit out of each pocket, looked at them fondly and pushed them back again.

"I've got mine anyway," he said. "Bread is ten shillings a loaf if you can buy it."

Annoyed by the colonel's manner Jo began to mount her high horse and became blunt. He was instantly suave.

He seemed dismayed at our idea (to which we still held) of going to Novi Bazar before Mitrovitza to see if really no route existed there.

"Impossible," said he; "bridges are broken between Rashka and Novi Bazar, and there is no route through the mountains from there."

We remembered that the country had been under Turkish rule there years before, and guessed that probably the Serbs had not yet been able to exploit new and lonely routes. At every side

in the streets were faces we knew, the head medical this and the chief military that.

Our personal carts went off in charge of the corporal, who was looking for bread from the Government, for of course all bread shops were shut permanently.

The Scottish sisters had not found a refuge, and messengers kept on coming back saying this place was full and that place had no room.

Colonel G—— became even less likable. It seemed as though there were no organisation of any kind in the town. At last, when dark had well fallen, a man said a room had been cleared for them in the hospital. The motor cars moved slowly off and we told the rest of our carts to follow, as Colonel G—— said we might get bread at the same place. We stumbled after them through pitch black streets, so uneven that one did not know if one were in the ditch or on the road itself; one lost all sense of direction and only tried not to lose sight of the flickering lights of the carts. Jo at last climbed into one, and the carts rumbled over a wooden bridge and began to go up a steep hill. We came suddenly to a rambling wooden house and our carts dived into a deep ditch. Jo leapt off just in time to save hers from turning right over. Crowds of wounded Serbians were standing at the foot of a rickety outside staircase. Above was a dressing-

station, and a dark smelly room with no beds, which was to be the sisters' home. We could get no bread and so went out once more into the dark. We did not know where our carts had gone, but some one said if we went in "that" direction we should find them. On we went uphill, losing our way in a maize field. In front of us were hundreds of camp fires. At the first we asked if they had seen the English. They shrugged their shoulders in negative. We asked at the next; same result. We had the awful thought that we should have to search every camp fire before we found our people, but luckily almost fell over Mawson, who had been fetching water. We were going in quite the wrong direction and but for this lucky meeting might have wandered for hours.

A good fire was blazing in front of the tents. An Austrian prisoner cut wood for us in exchange for a meal. He came from a large encampment whose fires were blazing near by. Dr. Holmes and a sister emerged through the smoke; they had at last got a cart and horse. With them was an Austrian subject flying for his life. He had lived for years in Serbia, his sympathies and ancestry were Serbian, but if the Austrians got him he would be hanged. We wondered if it was the husband of the frantic woman at Kralievo, but did not ask.

One went early to bed these nights. The men

spread out into two card-houses while Jo was hospitably given a real camp-bedstead in a corner of the Stobarts' kitchen, on the floor of which slept their men and also West, whose arm was getting worse.

CHAPTER XIX

NOVI BAZAR

We awoke to find where we were. The little encampment which we had seen to our left on entering the town, was now far on our right. The flat plain—where was the large tent with the red cross painted over it—had been our bed, the tent behind us; to our right was the brown hill topped by the old Turkish blockhouse; and in front a cut maize field with its solid red stubble sloped directly to the river, beyond which lay the village massed on the opposite slope up to a white church. Immediately below us on the river edge were the roofs of the "Stobarts'" refuge and of the Scottish women's hospital. Poplar trees in all the panoply of autumn sprang up from the valley with their tops full of the blackest crows, who cawed discordantly at the dawn. Our fire had gone out, but the Austrian had left enough wood, another was quickly started; but we found that Angelo in making his curries had melted all the solder from the empty biscuit tins and not one would hold

water. So there was a hurried transference of biscuits from a whole one.

From where we sat sipping our cocoa, we could see the hurried coming and going of motors in the main square, and groups of bullock waggons and soldiers about the fence of the church. A great street which split the village in two from top to bottom—the old Turkish frontier—was almost empty. The corporal proposed to visit the military commandant in search of hay and bread. So Jan dragged on his wet boots and set off with him down the hill, collecting Jo from the "Stobarts" on the way.

We crossed the rickety wooden bridge, passed between the *alfresco* encampments—like travelling tinkers—of waggoners and soldiers which lined the roads, up the great frontier street and so into the square. All that now was SERBIA was concentrated in this little village. Private houses had suddenly become ministries; cafés, head-quarters; and shops, departmental offices. The square was the central automobile station, and cars under repair or adjustment were in every corner. Beneath the church paling a camp of waggoners had a large bonfire and were cooking a whole sheep on a spit. Austrian prisoners with white, drawn faces were wandering about, staring with half unseeing eyes; a Serbian soldier was

chewing a hard biscuit, and a prisoner crept up to him begging for a corner of the bread; the soldier broke off a piece and gave it to him.

About the gate of the commandant's office were gathered Serbs and Austrians all waiting for bread. We pushed our way in. The hay was quickly arranged, but the bread was another matter.

"We have no bread," said the commandant.

"But," we objected, "all those men waiting outside. They would not come here if you had no bread."

The commandant pulled his moustache.

"We have bread only for soldiers."

There was a sudden commotion outside. The door was burst open; two soldiers entered dragging with them a man—a peasant; his eyes were staring, his face blanched. We then noticed that he was holding his shoulders in a curious manner, and realized that his arms were bound with his own belt. The two soldiers pushed him into an inner room, but the officials were busy, so he was stood in a corner.

"What has he done?" we asked.

"We have only bread for soldiers," repeated the commandant. Bread was evidently the most important.

"We have a Government order."

He scanned it, pounced upon the three franc phrase and offered us money. We pointed out that bread was indicated to the value——

"We have no bread for the English," he said at last.

Jo once more made the nasty little speech which we had found so effective at Kralievo. It worked like a charm. An enormous sack filled with loaves was dragged out and from it he choose three. We mentioned the man once more. The commandant shrugged his shoulders.

"He's going to be killed," he said. "Some soldiers looted his yard and he shot one."

He then asked the corporal if he would take flour instead of bread. The corporal agreed, adding that in that case, of course, they would get a bit more.

"Of course, you won't," said the commandant.

We sent the corporal back to the camp with the loaves, and with a little trouble found the house where Colonel P—— and Admiral T—— had lodgings. It was a gay little cottage, and both were at breakfast. They welcomed us and generously offered us their spare eggs, though eggs were scarce. The admiral had a large-scale map —made, of course, by Austria—and we hunted it for our road. Paths were marked quite clearly, and houses at most convenient intervals. It

seemed a far superior path to the Ipek pass, both regarding shelter and length.

"But," we said, "Sir Ralph suggests that we go to Mitrovitza, because the Serbs say that Uskub will fall in a few days."

"I should get out of the country as soon as you can," said one.

"It is exceedingly unlikely that Uskub can fall," said the other. But they promised us as definite information as they were allowed to give if we would return for tea, by when the aeroplane reconnaissance should have come in.

We went back to the camp with the news.

Colonel G—— came up and tried to wipe out the impression which he had made the evening before. He repeated that Uskub must certainly fall within the week, and that we should be very silly to go off to Novi Bazar, which we could never reach because the bridge had been washed away.

All the hill behind was crowded with Austrian prisoners. They had received one loaf between every three men, and said that it had to last three days. They did not know where they were going. Blease went through their lines, and at last found an old servant—a Hungarian. He was a stoic.

"One lives till one is dead," said he.

The hospital was doing a brisk trade in wounded:

sisters and doctors both hard at work. The "Stobarts" were resting, and had built a camp fire outside the door of their hovel. We got lunch ready, ruining recklessly another biscuit tin. While we were eating it a Serb came near.

"I am starving," he said.

We gave him some curry and rice. He devoured it.

"To-morrow," he said, "I go back to commando."

We pointed to his hand, which was bound in dirty linen.

"But?"

"It is better to go back though wounded than be starved to death."

We also held a court of justice. A driver complained that one of the Englishmen had given him a pair of boots and that the corporal had taken them.

"CORPORAL!!"

He came grinning. We exposed the complaint.

"Certainly the man had a pair of boots," said he; "but he has them no longer. Now, they are mine, I have taken them."

"But they were given to him."

"But I have taken them. I needed new boots." He exhibited his own, which were split.

We told him that possession by capture was not recognized in our circle, and ordered immediate restitution. He agreed gloomily, no doubt feeling that the foundations of his world were falling about his ears, and what was the use of being a corporal anyway?

In the afternoon we sought out the motor authorities, finding our old friends Ristich and Derrok in command. They easily promised us transport for Sir Ralph Paget's box and henchmen —no trouble at all they said. Yet had we not known them personally we might have waited a month without help. One is irresistibly reminded at every turn that the Near East means the East near the East and not the East near the West.

We went to the English colonel's, but no news was yet forthcoming, and we were, after a jolly tea, invited back at eight.

The camp was in darkness by the time we reached it once more. The fire lit up the men sitting about it, and the two inverted V's of the tent entrances; very faintly behind could be seen the outline of the line of little tented waggons. We had collected an additional member, Miss Brindley of the "Stobarts." She was very keen to get home, as her parents were anxious, and both her brothers at the front. Jo gave one look at her and said "Certainly." She had rushed immediately

into the town and had laid in a stock of beans and lentils, as her contribution to the common stock. They were all she could buy.

After supper back to the colonel's, and at last got definite news. It was unlikely that Skoplje would fall, and very little use loitering in hopes. The colonel advised Jan to get his party out by the best route possible, and we took a grateful farewell.

Coming back to the camp Jan had a nasty half-hour. Should we go by Mitrovitza, or should we go by Berane? In the first case there was the long route, the difficulty of getting lodgings and of transport, the risk of falling behind the Serbian General Staff, and of finding the country bare, the high passes of Petch and the snow; Willett was only just recovering from a bad chill, West's arm had grown much worse, and had been operated on in the morning by a doctor with a pair of scissors *faute de mieux*—a most agonizing process. On the other hand, the Berane route was unknown to the authorities, and might have fallen so into decay that it was useless; we did not know where the Austro-Germans were, and they might be already on the outskirts of Novi Bazar; if any of us fell ill we should certainly be captured. It was a toss up. Finally he asked the others. They said—

"What you think best. You know the country."

We finally decided to go to Novi Bazar and make inquiries. If there were no road we could go thence to Mitrovitza, and would only have lost a day. If, as the colonel said, the bridge was washed away, we could probably ford the river.

Then to bed. One could not sleep really well, for the rugs did not give sufficient warmth, and the chill striking up from the ground penetrated everything.

Took the road to Novi Bazar next day. Miss Brindley joined us with a parcel of blankets and a knapsack and a mackintosh lent by a friend. She had lost her boots, or the local cobbler had lost them, but most appropriately a motor had arrived and on it was a pair of new soldier's boots unclaimed. She took them, cut the feet of a pair of indiarubber Wellingtons and pulled them over her stockings, and put a smile on her face which never came off in spite of any fatigue.

Hilder and Antonio went off with Sir Ralph's box. The "Stobarts" wished us good luck, and away we clattered over the rickety bridge, up through the town and out into the Novi Bazar road. The surface was fairly good, and the day turned brilliant. We had left the six sisters and their luggage behind with their respective units, and so had four extra waggons to carry our stuff. We

rattled along cheerily, only dismounting at the occasional patches of mud which we met.

After a while we decided to lunch. We came to a café and halted.

"Have you coffee?" we asked.

"Ima."

"Will you give us all coffee?"

"We have no sugar," said the hostess; so we had no coffee.

We got out a tin of biscuits and lunched on those. As we were passing them round a soldier stopped.

"What are you selling those for?" he asked, under the impression that we were a travelling shop. We gave him some, to his great astonishment.

On we went again. Down below us in a field the corporal spotted a hayrick. Like stage villains the coachmen clambered down the hill, each with a rope—spoil from the discarded tents. They attacked the rick and soon nothing was left. As they staggered back, each hidden beneath an enormous load of hay—looking themselves like walking ricks—a Turk in black and white clothes ran down from above furiously brandishing a three-pronged fork.

"What are you doing?" he yelled.

The corporal stood stiffly and said—

"It is war. We are the State. It is of no value for you to preach."

The owner went dolefully down the hill, and stood looking at where his stack had been.

"We have again prevented those Germans from stealing good hay," said the corporal with satisfaction. Each cart looked not unlike a hay wain returning from the fields, and we scrambled up on to the top feeling like children in the autumn. After we had gone a mile we began to wonder why we had given the owner no compensation: evidently the corporal's influence was turning us into scoundrels.

At last the broken bridge. Only a shallow stream across which our carts splashed joyfully. On the other side was a small church with a beautiful blue tower. And soon we were in the outskirts of Novi Bazar, the most ordinary town of the Sanjak, combining the dull parts of Plevlie with the dull parts of Ipek. There was a stream down the middle of the road, in which some of the inhabitants were washing, while one sat on his haunches holding up a small looking-glass with one hand and shaving himself.

We bustled off to the mayor's office. Found him as usual in a back street in a shabby office up shaky wooden stairs. The mayor knew nothing of any road to Berane; so baffled, we again found

the street. We went to the shabby Turkish shops of the bazaar and inquired.

"Certainly," said the shopkeepers, "a good path to Berane, and not high. No; not so high as that by Ipek."

We returned to the mayor's office. He seemed little inclined to consent, and demanded to see our pass. Jo again made her little—but so useful—speech. The mayor called in an Albanian. After a long consultation the mayor said that he had no horses.

"Then we will take our carriage horses," said we.

"There are no roads for carriages," said the mayor.

"Then we will take the horses without the carriages."

The mayor called in two more men: they considered the pass once more.

"You may have the carriages two days more," he decided at last. "Go to Tutigne. As far as that the carriages will travel. There are many horses there, and you can get pack ponies."

Coming out we ran into Colonel Stajitch of Valievo. The colonel is a Serbian gentleman, fine figure, beautiful face, and white hair and moustaches. He greeted us, asked us our news. We told him of our projected journey. He became thoughtful and after a while said good-bye. We

took our convoy through the town to a field on the outskirts where we pitched the camp.

We borrowed the corporal's axe and hewed for some time in a thorn hedge, without getting much profit but many prickles, and finally decided to take a paling from a Turkish cemetery, for there was no one about.

Soon we had a jolly fire, and Cutting and Whatmough got to work on the food. Dr. Holmes turned up. He had arrived the day before and had found lodgings in an inn. West's arm was still inflamed and very painful. The doctor looked at it and said it needed more incision. West and Miss Brindley went off with him.

An old ragamuffin wandered up with a loaf of maize bread. He offered it to the corporal for three dinars; but the corporal took it away and gave him two. The old man made a great outcry. We demanded the cause. The unlawful corporal was again hailed to justice, his corporalship seeming more valueless than ever, and to give him a lesson we bought the bread for three dinars, for it was worth it.

We suddenly discovered that none of the Red Cross men had papers or passes. What was to be done? We were conniving at an almost unlawful expedition, and Jan was very doubtful if we could cross the Montenegrin frontier. But after a con-

sultation we decided to bluff it into Montenegro if necessary, and then telegraph to Cettinje to help us out.

It was now dark and West and Miss Brindley had not come back. So Jan and Jo went off to look for them. We searched two cafés—meeting again with our old acquaintance the schoolmaster from Nish—plunged into all sorts of odd corners, and at last met Colonel Stajitch in a restaurant. He greeted us.

"I have a great favour to ask," he said diffidently. "If I might I should like to give to you a little appendix. It is my son. He is seventeen, but is very big for his age. If the Austrians catch him I do not know what will become of him."

We were introduced to the boy, and at once consented.

"I will decide for certain to-morrow," said the colonel. "Can I meet you at seven o'clock?"

We hunted once more for West. Ran him to earth at last in the Hotel de Paris. This hotel could perhaps have existed in the Butte de Montmartre, but even there it would have been considered a disgrace. We had to pass through a long room crammed with sleeping soldiery, stepping across them to get to the door opposite. Every window was tight shut, and after one horrified gulp we held our breath till we reached the interior

courtyard. Here, too, were sleeping men, and all along the balconies and passages were more.

We found Holmes' room. West was there, rather white and just recovering from the anæsthetic. We sat down. Dr. Holmes had thought of coming with us, but the authorities had looked suspiciously at his passes, which were made out to Mitrovitza, so he decided to go on there. We wished that he had come, as a doctor would have been a great comfort had we really needed him.

After a rest West was well enough to go back to the camp.

CHAPTER XX

THE UNKNOWN ROAD

As we stood around the camp fire drinking our cocoa a queer ragged old Albanian crept up and watched us with a smile. He was the owner of the house near by, whose palings we had almost looted. We offered him cocoa, which he liked immensely; and asked him about the road to Tutigne. He said—

"There is a road for carts—I know it."

"Will you show it us?" said Jo.

He gave a wild yell and ran away, waving a stick.

"What——?!!!!——"

It was nothing, only the pigs had invaded his cabbage patch. He came back later with an enormous apple, which he presented to Jo.

"Have you apples for sale?"

He shook his head, saying "Ima, ima."

We bought several pounds, arranged with him to guide us later to the carriage road, and hurried into the town to buy provisions.

There we met Colonel Stajitch. "Will you take my boy?"

"Delighted. Are his papers in order?"

The mayor hereupon turned up, and the colonel's face grew longer as they conversed.

"The mayor cannot give me the necessary permits without Government sanction," he said. "I must get it from Rashka by telephone. It will take an hour. Can you wait?"

We spent the time shopping. Each shop looked as empty as if it had been through a Saturday night's sale. One had elderly raisins, another had a few potatoes. We found some onions, bought another cooking pot and kitchen necessaries, and packed them in the carts which had arrived in the town. Nobody would take paper money unless we bought ten francs' worth. After waiting an hour and a half we hunted down the colonel. The telephone official told us he had got leave from the Government. At last we found him in the mayor's office, bristling with papers and the passport.

"I have got you an armed policeman as escort," he said, waving the papers, "and the boy has a good horse, twenty pounds in gold, and twenty in silver."

We found the boy waiting with the carriages. He wore a strange little brown cashmere Norfolk jersey and very superior black riding breeches.

Dressed more romantically he would have made an ideal Prince for an Arabian Nights' story. His father accompanied us until our Albanian guide announced—

"Here begins the carriage road."

Their parting must have been a hard thing. The father could not tell how his son's expedition would end, and the son was leaving his father to an unknown fate. They embraced, smiling cheerily, and the boy rode on ahead of us all, blowing his nose and cursing his horse.

In many places the "carriage road" was no road at all. The carts lurched and bumped over rivers, boulders, fields, and the inevitable mud. Several times we had to jump on our carts as they dragged us over deep and rapid rivers. After three hours we stopped at a farm, our mounted policeman called out the owners and autocratically ordered two of the young men to accompany us as guides and guards.

They came, bearing their guns, white fezzed, white clothed, black braided youths with shaven polls and flashing teeth. We began to climb, and for hours and hours we toiled upwards. The carriages lumbered painfully far behind us, led by their elderly and panting drivers.

"If this is what they call a good and easy road," we thought, "it would have been better to

harness four horses to each cart, and to have left five carts behind."

The horses came from the plain of Chabatz, and had probably never seen a hill in their lives.

"These horses will die," said the corporal; but he seemed more interested in hunting for water for himself than in the struggles of the poor beasts.

One of our Albanian guides was overwhelmed with the beauty of Cutting's silver-plated revolver.

"How much did you pay for it?"

"Thirty francs," said Cutting, shooting at the scenery.

Jan produced his automatic, but the Albanian scorned it as one would turn from a lark to a bird of Paradise. He turned the glittering object over lovingly, thought, felt in his pockets, drew out a green and red knitted purse, and shook his head.

"I will give you thirty francs."

But Cutting wasn't on the bargain. He pocketed the treasure again, and we plodded on.

"How far are we from Tutigne?" we asked.

"Four hours," said a dignified Albanian, who had joined our party.

"No, two hours," said another.

"Three at most," corrected a third.

The first man lifted his hand. "I say four hours, and it is four hours. With such horses as these we crawl."

We reached a desolate tableland at dusk. Here the horses halted for some while. With the halt came a sudden desire to stay there for good. It seemed as if we should never reach Tutigne. The evening brought with it chilly damp breezes, and the footsore company was getting quite disheartened.

"Let us camp here," said everybody.

But the policeman had a mailbag to deliver that night, and we had to push on. Experienced as we were in Serbian roads, never had we seen such mud. Down, down sank our feet, and we could only extract them again clinging to the carts with the sound of a violent kiss. We tried to escape it by climbing into the thick brushwood, only to find it again, stickier and more slippery, while the bushes grasped us with thorny arms and athletically switched our faces. A moonless darkness came upon us and we had to walk just behind the carriages, peering at the square yard of road illuminated by candles in our penny lanterns.

Occasionally a voice greeted us. We asked how far Tutigne was.

"About an hour," was the invariable answer all along the line.

But the dignified guide was right. After four hours we reached the main street, arriving slowly to the music of incredible clatter as our little carts

leapt and jolted over hundreds of big pointed stones laid carefully side by side—Tutigne's concession to Macadam.

There were faint lights in some of the little wooden houses. Others stood dark and unfriendly. We stopped. Curses filled the air. An ox-cart was lying right across the road. After shouting himself hoarse the policeman woke up an old man in a house near by—the owner. He rheumatically grumbled in his doorway; so the gendarme called our Albanians, and in two twos they had turned the cart upside down in a ditch, saying—

"It serves you right."

Voices sounded in the darkness. The carriages lurched on. Presently they left the road and turned on to grass, they seemed to be leaving the village behind. We did not know where they were going, and were so tired that we did not care, if only they would get somewhere and stop, which at last they did. We jumped off into a squelch of water.

"Good heavens, this won't do!"

We searched the whole field for a dry spot, but though it was a hillside, it was a swamp. We chose the least marshy place and built a fire.

"Where is the mayor?" we asked of the strange faces dimly to be seen in the light of our fire.

They pointed to two cottage window lights.

We went towards them, at last realizing our proximity by stumbling into a dung-heap and knocking against a pig-stye. There was a narrow stairway, and above it a big landing. A man followed and knocked at a door for us.

The mayor appeared—a little man—square in face, hair, beard and figure.

We explained ourselves and showed our letter. He looked grave at our demand for horses; said we would talk it over on the morrow, and sympathized about the swampy field.

"Would you like to sleep here on the floor?" he said, showing us a clean-looking office. "We regret we have no beds."

We were delighted. His wife, who had gone to bed, appeared in a striped petticoat and a second one worn as a shawl.

"The tables shall be moved and the stove lit," she said. "It will be ready in a few minutes."

We picked our way back to the fire, avoiding the dung-heap and pig-stye, whereby we nearly fell into a cesspool. Cocoa was brewing, one card-house had been erected as a shelter for some of our things. The drivers were crouched round their own fire cooking something. It was difficult to find our bundles in the carts as one only recognized them by the drivers. We climbed in feeling about by the light of a match. Jo found a foot in one.

"How can we find things with people lying on them?" she said to the foot.

It remained immobile; she pulled it—no response. She tugged it. A face lifted itself at the far end of the cart. It was the corporal's wife lying on her own possessions, very tired and rather cross. Jo patted her remorsefully and decamped.

We must have looked like a regiment of gnomes bearing forbidden treasure as we hobbled through the darkness, laden with our bundles of blankets. The light in the office nearly blinded us, and the heat from the stove struck us like a violent blow. The mayor, his wife, two hurriedly dressed children and several other people received us. There was an awkward silence. Jo murmured in the background—

"It is manners here to go up, shake hands, and say one's name."

Very uncomfortably everybody did so, one by one. Another silence. We racked our brains—the weather—our journey—the war. One had nothing sensible to say about anything. Jo asked the children's age. The information was supplied. Silence. We filled the gap by smiling. At last the mayor's wife said we must be worn out, and they all left us.

The mayor crept back. "Don't talk about the military situation," he said; "if these Turks knew

it they might kill us all." Then he shut the door.

We flew to a window and opened it, changed our stockings, hung wet boots and socks over the stove, ate bully beef, and rolled up, pillowing our heads on our little sacks—thirteen sleepy people.

The mayor's wife opened the door an inch and peeped at us as we lay, looking, indeed, more like a jumble sale than anything. Mawson wore a Burglar cap tied under his chin, and a collection of khaki mufflers, looking equipped for a Channel crossing. Miss Brindley's head was tied up in a bandana handkerchief; Jo's in a purple oilsilk hood; others shared mackintosh sheets and blankets; West pulled his Serbian cap right down to his mouth. Jan put on the white mackintosh dressing-coat, over that his greatcoat, then he spread out a red, green, yellow and black striped Serbian rug, rolled up in it with many contortions, and pushed his feet into a tent bag. Blease in a Balaklava, showing nose like an Arctic explorer, got into a black oilskin, one corner of which had been repaired with a large yellow patch, he then rolled up in oddments collected from the company, as his own overcoat had been stolen, and bound it all together by tying the many coloured knitted rug around him, after putting the lamp out inadvertently with his head.

In the morning we interviewed the mayor. He read and reread the letter from the Novi Bazar mayor, took an interest in the social supremacy of Stajitch's father, who was a man of birth, but said he had no horses.

Jo appealed to his better feelings. He scratched his head.

"Yes, truly one must try to help the English," he said, but looked very glum.

"I will have the neighbouring hamlets searched for horses."

We thanked him and wandered into the village café. An old man with black sprouting eyebrows à la Nick Winter, was sitting there. He had walked for five days, eating only apples.

"Very good food too," he said. "Here is my luggage."

He pointed to a knotted handkerchief containing a tiny loaf of bread which he had just acquired. His goal was a monastery in Montenegro, where he said they would house and feed him for the winter in exchange for a little work.

At 11.30 three horses were brought. Three more were promised, so we reluctantly decided to start the next day. There was nothing to do.

Our carriages went. We gave the corporal a card-house to take back to Rashka with little faith that he would not try to stick to it. He had not

returned the boots to their owner, so we took them from him and gave them to their rightful owner, and handed over to the corporal a spare pair of our own boots to keep him honest.

At dawn Stajitch, who had been sleeping in style upon a friend's table, came to say we had six horses, but a professor had turned up in the night and was coming with us. He had been so exhausted with the walk that his policeman had carried him most of the way. Not pleased, we went to inspect him. He was small, corpulent, and was sitting with clasped woolly gloves, goloshed feet, and a diffident smile.

He explained to us that he was delicate, and as he was no walker it would be necessary for him to ride one horse. So we packed our food, sacks, blankets, mackintoshes and the card-house as best we could on the remaining five horses.

No sooner had we left the village, and all signs of road or bridle path, with a new policeman and two or three ragged Albanians, than one of the horses broke loose and began to dance—first the tango, then the waltz. The pack, which was but insecurely attached, stood the tango, but with the waltz a bag of potatoes swung loose at the end of a rope, its gyroscopic action swinging the horse quicker and quicker until it was spinning on one toe. Then the girths broke, saddle and all came

to the ground. The brute looked round as if saying "That's that," and cantered off, followed slowly by the professor on horseback. We called. He appeared to take no notice. At last he turned round saying—

"The horse will not."

Jo leapt in the air kicking.

"Do that with your heels," she said.

But we had to send the policeman to help him. He rode hour by hour, hitting his beast with a bent umbrella, and lifting two fat hands to heaven.

"Teshko" (It is hard), he whined.

"*Ni* je teshko" (It is not hard), said Miss Brindley, cheerfully trudging along.

We wanted to stop at the top of a hill for lunch.

"Horrible," he said. "Here the brigands will shoot us from the bushes," and pushed ahead, being held on by the grinning policeman.

We pulled out some biscuits and margarine, and drank water from our bottles, cigarettes went round, and we charged ahead. In front was the professor falling off his horse and being put on again.

We were very anxious about the frontier. Most of our party were travelling without official permits, as they had known nothing about such things; but we hoped that being English Red Cross

and having passports there would not be much trouble. We arrived at a little village, three or four wooden houses. Three pompous old men came to meet us, and we took coffee together outside the inn. They were very surprised to hear we were English, and said that no English had ever passed that way before.

At the frontier, an hour further on, a man and his wife came down from a little house on the hill and stopped us. They examined the papers of the two Serbs, but left us alone, to our huge relief. We breathed again.

Soon after, however, Whatmough rushed up to Jan and Jo, who were talking to a ragged woman.

"Do come and talk. An officer has arrested West and Mawson."

We ran ahead to find a perplexed mounted officer surrounded by our party. He had come upon West and Mawson walking on ahead and took them to be Bulgarian comitaj.

"No, that's not an English uniform," he said, and searched them for firearms. When the others came he wavered. Miss Brindley did not look like a comitaj; and by the time we arrived he began to talk about the military situation in the Balkans, and rode off with the politest of farewells.

If there isn't a telegraph wire to guide, don't take short cuts. Jan, Stajitch, and Jo tried to

race the darkness by cutting straight down a ravine. We lost the horses, lost every one else, and we came out again on to a hill crest. No one was to be seen. After a while the professor rode by, led by his policeman, who had been almost suffocated by laughter all day.

"Teshko, teshko," moaned the professor.

"Ni je teshko," we said. "But where are the horses?"

He waved a hand vaguely behind him. Rogerson, Whatmough, and Owen came up. It was getting dark and a mist was rising. So we left the three at the corner to mark where it was and went back. For a long time we stumbled in the darkness, shouting, but no horses could we find. At last we decided to turn back, wondering if they too had lost their way and decided to camp out. There were shouts in the valley beyond. A light flashed and some one fired off a revolver. There was a candle end in Jan's bag, and by its dim light we found a road. It went downwards, so we thought it might be the right one. Suddenly it turned in the wrong direction, but as there were hoof marks on it we decided to follow it as it must lead somewhere—we could not search the whole countryside with a candle. Just as we were in despair the road seemed to shake itself and twisted back again. We heard more shouting and saw a light, and at

last found Miss Brindley and Mawson, who were waiting for us.

"We have been to the village," they said.

We asked them about the horses. They said they were all there!!!!

That professor again!

Some one heard trickling water, and with a cry of joy we put our mouths under the jet of water which spouted from a little trough which jutted from the hill. Nothing could be seen of the village when we arrived, but it seemed very long and very stony. An old peasant with a candle led us for what seemed miles between high palisades of wood until we reached the inn.

There was a big room with a stove in the middle and many Montenegrins in uniform were sitting about. Some of our party were already asleep, worn out on the benches. We opened a tin of beef, got some bread and kaimack and woke up the others for their evening meal. While we were eating a Montenegrin staff officer said—

"Your commandant, the professor——"

"What?" said we.

"Your commandant, the professor, has said you will rest here to-morrow."

We told him the professor was no commandant of ours, and that we certainly would not rest there to-morrow.

" Well," said the staff officer, " he has certainly ordered horses for the day after from the captain."

We were too tired to rectify matters at once, and our meal finished, we rolled up on the dirty floor.

CHAPTER XXI

THE FLEA-PIT

Those comfortable folks who have never slept out of a bed do not know how annoying a blanket may be, if there is nothing into which to tuck its folds. Wrap yourself up in one, lie flat and motionless on the floor, and we guarantee that in an hour the blanket has unrolled itself and is making frantic efforts to escape. Every night on the road resolved into a half-dazed attempt to hold on to the elusive wrap. Sleep came in as a second consideration, and when we say we awoke on any particular morning, it really means that we got up, though several of us in the intervals of blanket catching did get in a snore or two.

Well, we got up, then, in good time next day, hoping to rectify the professor's interference, and stumbling along with Stajitch, we reached the high-roofed "Dürer" dwelling where resided the commandant of the village. In the kitchen we found two women with bare feet, two children and a man half undressed. He brought in the captain, also

in negligée. Now, mark, we were in Montenegro. We exposed our grievance to the captain and roundly denounced the professor as an interfering old beggar. The captain first gave us coffee, second hurried us to his office, third called in three henchmen and issued rapid orders.

"Certainly, certainly. You shall have all the horses you need. Just only wait one little quarter of an hour. I will give you four policemen to go with you."

We protested that four was too many.

"No, no," he said, "you had better have four."

We went back joyfully to the hotel. Cutting or one of the others had been exploring and had gotten twenty eggs. The hotel people consented to cook them. While we were outside looking at the mosques and wondering when the horses were coming, the professor walked into the bar-room.

"Ah," said he, "eggs."

"They belong to the English," said the hostess.

"Good," said the professor, and swallowed four.

Just then we returned.

"But there are only sixteen eggs," said we.

"The professor has eaten the others," said the woman, pointing.

In a minute the professor wished that he had not. Jan took the opportunity of saying a few things which had been boiling within him. He accused the wretched man of interference in assuming control of the expedition; he said that he was a mere hanger-on, and a useless and selfish one at that.

The professor wilted. He made a thousand apologies, and finally ran off wringing his fat hands, found with great difficulty four more eggs and cast them into the boiling water.

"There," he said, "you can have your four eggs."

"It's not the eggs," answered Jan, "it's you."

Jo was roaring with laughter. Some of the morning she had been in a woman's house listening to one of the policeman's tales of the professor, and soon the whole village was rocking with amusement at "Teshko."

At last the horses arrived—six miserable-looking beasts, but this time all had shoes. One was commandeered by the professor.

"He is the greatest philosopher in all Serbia," whispered an official to Jan.

"Ah, I guessed there must be some reason," said Jan.

We had a send-off, all the village came to see

us go away. The day was a repetition of our previous experiences. A long tramp in the mud. At the top of the highest pass we had yet reached was an old wooden blockhouse.

We came upon it unexpectedly, rounding a corner. Montenegrin soldiers were cooking at a wood fire; but we were surprised to find all round the square log cabin deep rifle pits, the best we had yet seen in Serbia.

"Good Lord, what are those for?" said Jan.

"This is an old Turkish post," said the sergeant. "It has been kept up. We don't know why."

We walked off meditating. Montenegrins do not squander soldiers without reason; and then one's mind went back to the four armed guards who were accompanying us.

We discovered the truth later, let us tell the story here.

Berane, to which we were descending, was once a populous growing Turkish town. After the Balkan war it fell into Montenegrin territories. The Montenegrins chased out all the Turkish landowners, who fled to these mountains, where they formed bands of brigands and caused no little consternation and trouble to the authorities, who could not catch them. The authorities passed a little Act,

reinstating the landowners in their territories; but when an attempt was made to put the Act into force, it was found that the authorities themselves were in possession of the lands. What was to be done? The blockhouse was the solution.

We stopped at a primitive café and lunched. Jo gave the children some chocolate. They did not know what it was. She smeared some on to the baby's lips, and after that it sucked hard. Soon the little girl licked hers; but the boy, more suspicious, would not eat, holding the lump till it melted into a sticky mass in his fingers. The scenery was very beautiful. There was a faint rain which greyed everything, and the near birches had lost all their leaves and the twigs made a reddish fog through which could be seen the slopes of the opposite hillsides. The professor began to be worried about the rain.

"If this should turn to snow," said he, "we would be snowed up. And I am sure I don't know what I should do if I were snowed up."

We hoped to reach our halting place, which was called Vrbitza, before dark; but it was further away than our informant had said. Once more we found ourselves floundering about in the mud of the village path after dusk. We reached houses which we could not see; walked over slippery poles

set over heaven knows what middens. Clambered up creaky steps into the usual sort of dirty wooden room—and there, his stockings off, warming his toes at the blaze of the wood fire, was "Eyebrows."

We were immediately attracted by three paintings on the wall. They were decorative designs, very beautiful. We asked the proprietor who had done them.

"I did," he said.

"Will you sell them?" we asked.

He giggled like a girl. "Ah, who would buy them?" he said.

"We will."

"I couldn't let you have them for less than sixpence," he said. "You see the papers cost a penny each."

Whatmough coveted one, so he had his choice, we took the other two.

The policeman came to tell us that rooms had been prepared in two clean houses. We scrambled out into the dark again, stumbled along in the mud, and at last found an open square of light, through which we came into a room.

There was a red rug over half the floor, and a brasier on three legs filled with charcoal standing in the centre. One or two of our men had already found the place and were lying on the rug. In

one corner was a large baking oven like a beehive, half in one and half in the room next door. A wide shelf ran from the beehive almost to the open door. There were two small windows, each about the size of this book wide open. Jan and Jo sniffed. Where had they smelt that odour before ?

An old woman in Albanian costume crept up to Jo and caught her by the skirt.

" See," she said, dragging her into the next room, " here is a fine bed. The ladies will sleep with me this night."

Jo looked at the old lady's greasy hair and filthy raiment.

" We always sleep with our own people," she said firmly.

The old lady protested. All the while our men were packing the baggage beneath the shelf. It was a tight fit, but at last it was got in.

The professor entered once more on the scene.

" This house will do very well for the common people," he said, " but the Herr Commandant " (meaning Jan) " and the two ladies will come over to sleep with me."

" No, we won't," said Jan, Jo and Miss Brindley in one voice.

" Then what will you do ? "

" We will give you two policemen, or all four if

you like. We will pack in here somehow. You can take the other house all to yourself."

"That will not do," said the professor. "If you are all determined to sleep here, I too, will come here. You will need somebody to protect you."

Jo's back went up.

"If you are afraid to sleep in the other house," she said, "you can sleep here with us. But if you are coming here to protect us, we don't require *you*."

"But you do not understand," said the professor kindly, as if to a child: "there is danger. You will need me to protect you."

"Not in the least," answered Jo. "If you will say that you are afraid, we will offer you our shelter. Otherwise you can have all four policemen at the other house."

The professor was afraid to say that he was afraid, so after stating that we were curious people, he went off with the guards.

With great difficulty we packed in. Cutting and Whatmough were forced to climb on to the shelf and the brazier was pushed out of the room. One by one we rolled up in our rugs, made pillows out of a pair of boots or a cocoa tin, cursed each other for taking up so much space, and at last all were jammed together like sardines. It was like the

family in the drawing: If father says turn, we all turn.

We did not rest well. Thirteen people in a room which would comfortably hold three was a little too close packing. There was a lot of grumbling coming from one corner, and after a while a light was struck.

"Good lord," said somebody, "my pillow's crawling!"

Bugs were cascading down the walls. Stajitch jumped to his feet, and began stamping hard. "Rivers of them," he yelled.

Cutting and Whatmough were groaning about the heat, so we opened the door. Immediately all the dogs of the village, half wolves, hurled themselves at the lighted space. Stajitch slammed it just in time; had they burst in, lying down as we were, we should have been unable to protect ourselves.

A dark face peered in between the baking oven and the wall, a swarthy Albanian face. It looked at us and then silently withdrew.

"It doesn't matter," said somebody at last, "we've got to stick it."

We roused up neither rested nor refreshed. The room seen in the dim light of the morning seemed even more revolting than it had been the night before. We demanded the bill, it was brought

—five francs for apples which we had bought. And for the room ? Nothing. We gave our host three francs extra, and he bowed, putting his hands to his bosom and kissed our palms.

There was a good stiff clay soil waiting for our tiring feet, and by the time we reached Berane, there was no thought of going further. Almost every one was exhausted.

We reached the shores of the river. The bridge had been washed away, but the inhabitants had made a boat like a sort of huge wooden shoe which they dragged to and fro with ropes. We clambered in and were hauled over. Our baggage had not yet arrived, so Jan and Stajitch ordered lunch for the others and went down to see about it. Just as they were landed on the opposite bank the rope broke. So all the Montenegrins and Albanians who were working the ferry went off to a midday meal, leaving the two with the pangs of hunger growling within, sitting on the bank.

After two hours' waiting the rope was repaired, and they got back to lunch famishing. We then arranged sleeping places and locked up all the baggage in an empty shop. Our room was one of those ordinary Montenegrin bedrooms plastered with pictures. Amongst them was a postcard, and on it was printed large in English in blue crystalline letters, " Never Again."

Whence did it come, this enigmatic postcard, and what did it mean? It seemed almost a solemn warning; yet in a hotel bedroom. What did the hostess think it meant?

"Never Again."

Some of the men came in cheering, having found Turkish delight in one of the shops. We were sadly needing sugar, as our last tin had been stolen along with lots of other things. So we indulged in "Turkish" not wisely.

The professor got up to his old games again. Again he had told the commandant that he was leading the British, and that we would rest the next day, and again Jan had to pick him off his perch.

Some got a bed that night, the others had to sleep "in rows," half under the beds and half projecting out. The people on the beds said it was a funny sight.

When we unpacked at night we found who had been robbing us. The policemen. We had missed many more things, but found that the amount varied in direct ratio to the number of police who guarded us. All our spare boots were now gone, Blease's overcoat, and also Miss Brindley's. Jo had lost her only other coat and skirt, and one or two mackintoshes were missing. Now we knew why the police wore long-skirted

coats; but what a disappointment the one must have had who lifted Jo's coat and skirt.

Got off again in good time the next morning. Cutting and three others stayed behind to look after the police. Lucky they did, because one of the horses wore out, and the police would have left it on the road, pack and all. As it was we left the horse grazing, but the baggage was transferred.

There had been a decentish level road made from Andrievitza half way to Berane, and women were working hard on the extension in the hopes of getting it finished for the Serbs; but that they could never do, for there were but few of them. Further on many of the bridges were unfinished, and in one or two places a landslide had carried away the road itself, leaving a deep clinging mud in its place, but we were getting used to mud.

We met "Eyebrows" once more, just at the entrance to the village; but he was going on to Pod, so had finally got a day ahead of us. Found rooms in our old resting place.

The professor was threatening to accompany us to Italy—he was like the old man of the sea. We got a telegram from the English Minister, saying that he did not think we could ever get to Italy from Scutari. We preferred to trust to our luck which so far had been wonderful, especially in the

matter of weather. In the evening the captain sent to say that twenty horses would await us the next day. A motor car would have been sent, he added, but almost all the bridges were washed away and they could get no nearer than Liéva Riéka.

CHAPTER XXII

ANDRIEVITZA TO POD

A PROBLEM met us in the morning. Willett was quite ill and only fit for bed. But bed was impossible. We had just escaped from the sound of the guns, and did not know which way the Austrians were coming. To wait was too risky; others would certainly get seedy and sooner or later some one might get seriously ill. We felt we must push on to Podgoritza and be within hail of doctor and chemist. But Willett looked very wretched, lying flat and refusing breakfast.

We plied him with chlorodyne; but the chlorodyne did not like him and they parted company. We tried chlorodyne followed by brandy with better effect. Others also showed a distinct interest in the chlorodyne bottle. We felt very anxious: milk was almost unprocurable, other comforts nil.

We finally decided that if he was going to have dysentery he had better have it decently and in order at Podgoritza, than stand the chance of being suddenly surprised by the Austrians and made to

walk endless distances. So we heaved him on to a wooden pack, and the other chlorodyney figures of woe climbed on to the remaining queer-looking saddles.

Blease tried a horse which had a thoughtful eye. It kicked him on the knee, and trod on his toe, so he relinquished the joy of riding for the serener pleasure of walking. Jan clambered on to it, whereupon it stood on its forelegs, and as there were no stirrups and the saddle back hit him behind, he landed over its neck, remaining there propped up by a stick which was in his hand. After readjusting himself inside the two wooden peaks of the saddle, he testified his disapproval to the beast, and trotted away in style, leaving a row of grinning Montenegrins and boys behind with the exception of one who clung to reins and other bits of saddlery, imploring him to stop. It would seem as if pack ponies were never meant to trot, but at last he shook off the pony boy, passed Miss Brindley (whose horse was looking at himself in a puddle with such deep and concentrated interest that he pulled her over his head and landed her in the middle of the water), and reached the vanguard of the party, who had deserted their horses for a lift on a lorry—Willett, sitting in front with the driver, was shrunk like a concertina inside his great coat.

The lorry dropped us just before the first broken bridge. Then we had to leave the road and face mud slush, climbing for hours. We had picked up various friends—a courtly old peasant who was very worried to hear that Kragujevatz had fallen, and feared for the invasion of Montenegro; two barefoot girls, who asked Jo all the usual questions, and an American-speaking Serbian man who had trudged from Ipek, the first refugee on that road from Serbia. He was very mysterious, and contrary to the usual custom, would not tell us about himself nor where he was going.

He was very anxious to stand us drinks, but curiously enough, every one refused. The professor had started before us, with a Greek priest. When we passed him he lifted his hands deprecatingly, "Teshko."

Our hopes of arriving before dark were as usual crushed. The dusk found us still floundering in the mud on wayside paths. It began to pour. The hills above us became white—a straight line being drawn between snow and rain—and our guides wanted us to spend the night at an inn two hours before we reached Jabooka. But it looked very uninviting—we remembered the cheery hostess of Jabooka, the woman who came from "other parts," and knew a thing or two about cleanliness. Every one agreed to go on.

Willett was rather better, so we forged ahead in the downpour and the dark, splashing through puddles and singing everything we knew. Our Albanian guides chuckled and chanted their own nasal songs in a different key as an accompaniment.

Far away we saw a tiny light—Jabooka. We stretched our legs and hurried along, but alas! the inn room was full. There was the professor, his face shining from warmth and well-being, crowds of men in uniform, some fat travelling civilians: faces looked up from the floor, from the corners, faces were everywhere, wet boys were steaming in front of the fire, while the hostess and a girl were picking their way as best they could in the tobacco smoke with eggs and rakia.

Full; even the floor! and we were wet through. The professor had announced that we were staying at the dirty inn away back. Oh, the old villain!

He came forward, saying in an impressive voice that a major had taken the inn.

"Bother the major," said Jo. "Something must be done."

The professor smiled. "There *is* another inn."

There was nothing for it. We had to go to the inn across the road, glad enough to have a roof at all. The rain was tearing down as if the heavens were filled with fire-engines.

But they didn't want us there. We beheld

a dirty low-ceiled room filled with filthy people and a smell of wet unwashed clothes.

The owner and his wife received us roughly. "We have no room, we have nothing," they said.

We stood our ground. "We *must* have a roof to-night."

Outside the road had become a river, our men were nearly dropping with fatigue.

"You can't come here," said the innkeeper, looking at us with great distrust.

The major, whom Jo had "bothered," came in. "You must take these people," he said, and asked various searching questions about the rooms.

Reluctantly the truth came out that if the whole family slept in one room there would be one for us. The major ordered them to do it. Jo wished she hadn't "bothered" him quite so gruffly.

The daughters stamped about, furiously pulling all the blankets off the two beds, while one of them stood in the doorway watching us to see that we did not secrete the greasy counterpanes. Several of the party sat, hair on end, with staring eyes, too tired to shut them.

"Food?"

"Nema Nishta," was the response.

"Can we boil water?"

"No."

"Where can we boil it?"

"Nowhere."

"But there is a fire in the kitchen," we said, pointing to a hooded fireplace where a few sticks were burning.

"Why shouldn't they boil water?" said a kindly looking man.

"Well, I suppose they can," said the old woman, who became almost pleasant over the kitchen fire—telling Jo she was sixty and only a stara Baba (old granny).

Miss Brindley made tea. We cheered as she brought it in. Tea, bully beef, and our last biscuits comprised our dinner, which we ate in big gulps, after which we sang "Three blind mice" as a digestive.

The half-open door was full of peering faces, so somewhat encouraged we gave them a selection of rounds.

We left next morning early in a heavy downpour, after being exorbitantly charged, glad to leave Jabooka for ever.

The professor was before us, an aged red Riding Hood, clad in his scarlet blanket. The day was long and uneventful. Trudge, trudge, splash, splash. The dividing line between snow and rain still was heavily marked, but it sleeted and our hands were quite numbed. We crossed an angry stream on a greasy pole and most of us splashed in. Whatmough

stood in the water, remarking, "I'm wet and I'll get no wetter," and helped people across. Again after dark we arrived at Liéva Riéka, to find our dirty old inn again; but it had a real iron stove which gave out a glorious heat, and we crowded around in the ill-lit room, clouds of steam arising from us. We tried to dry our stockings against the stove pipe, but the old mother did not approve. She was afraid of fire. When she ran out of the room, socks were pressed surreptitously against the pipe with a "sizz," and when she returned, innocent looking people were standing against the wall, no socks to be seen.

The eldest daughter settled down with her head in Jo's lap, having failed to get Miss Brindley alongside. She gazed longingly at Miss Brindley from Jo's lap, and asking for all the data possible as to her life.

"A devoika (girl), free, travelling from a country so far away that it would take three months in an oxcart to get there."

"Oh, how wonderful!"

They gave us a tiny room and two benches—much too small for the whole company; so some slept outside on the balcony.

The professor was in the adjoining inn, so we guessed it must be the best; but a young French sailor, from the wireless in Podgoritza, who came

to gossip with us, said there was nothing to choose.

He was champing, as the Government were commandeering the wireless company's motor cars right and left using them to cart benzine; and now they were going to send a refugee Serb officer's family to Podgoritza in his motor, leaving him sitting.

We spent the next morning waiting for the motor, not knowing if it would arrive or no. The professor sailed away in the French one, being one up on us again. It still rained, so we sat contemplating the possibilities of lunch. No sooner was it on the boil than the biggest automobile in Montenegro, a covered lorry, turned up.

We persuaded the driver to lunch with us, and packed ourselves and our dingy packages on to the wet floor. The motor buzzed up and downhill, incessantly twisting and turning: what we could see of the view from the back waved to and fro like Alpine scenery seen in the cinematograph. Stajitch became violently seasick with the fumes of benzine, which arose from two big tanks we were taking along, and lay with his head lolling miserably out of the back of the car.

Pod once more, sleepy, inhospitable Pod.

We bargained for rooms at our old inn—mixed beds and floors. The owner was asking more than

ever; he shrugged his shoulders and raised his hands.

"The war—increasing prices."

So we took what we could, put Stajitch to bed, saw the prefect, our old friend from Chainitza, who promised us a carriage for Cettinje in the morning.

Miss Brindley, joyfully ready to see Cettinje and anything else that might turn up, joined Jo and Jan in the old shandrydan carriage which lumbered along for seven hours to Cettinje.

"We are going to find Turkish delight," said the others, as they disappeared down a side street, revelling in the idea of a rest.

Cettinje was inches deep in water. We assured the Count de Salis that much as we needed money to continue the journey, we needed baths more.

This was a weighty matter and needed much thinking out, petroleum being very scarce. The huge empty Legation kitchen stove was lit and upon it were placed all the kettles, saucepans, and empty tins in the place; the picturesque old baggy-breeched porter, his wife, and little boy stoking hard, and asking lots of questions. One by one we were ushered into a room, not the bathroom but a room containing the sort of comfortable bath which makes the least water go the longest way, and also a beautiful hot stove. This solemn rite occupied

a whole afternoon. We had not taken our clothes off for sixteen days and had been in the dirtiest of places. A change of underclothing was effected. None too soon! for at Liéva Riéka we had picked up lice.

We compared notes on this part afterwards. "Happy hunting?" we inquired like Mowgli's friends. It was good to sit by the big kitchen stove holding bits of dripping clothing to the blaze; the downfall at Cettinje the evening before having completely drenched our damp things again.

Next day outside the world was white and silent, the snow covering the little city and its intrigues with a thick whitewash.

The minister was the kindest of hosts and could not do enough for us during our stay. Cettinje had not changed much. The hotel-keeper showed an intense and violent anxiety to leave Montenegro. Never had his native Switzerland seemed so alluring and never was it so unattainable. The chemist, who owned a little one-windowed shop, was engaged to the king's niece, quite a lift in the world for her, as she was marrying a man of education.

Penwiper, the dog, was still in sole possession of the street, and again went mad with joy at the sound of English women's voices, and accompanied

us everywhere, generally upside-down in the snow, clutching our skirts with her teeth.

Jan was in and out of the Transport Office door while Miss Brindley and Jo were being followed around the streets by a jeering crowd of children, who seemed to think that Miss Brindley's india-rubber boot-top leggings and Jo's corrugated stockings and safety-pinned-up skirt out of place. We bought some bags from a woman we afterwards heard was suspected of being an Austrian spy.

Poor old Prenk Bib Doda was in our hotel. He was Prince of the Miridites. As a boy he had been kidnapped by the Turks and haled off to Constantinople. Grown to a middle-aged man in captivity, he was restored to his tribes during the Young Turk Revolution, only to be abducted by the Montenegrins, and to be kept practically a prisoner in Cettinje. We don't know if he disliked it, possibly not, for his walk in life seems to be that of a professional hostage, if one may say so. His ideals of comfort were certainly nearer to the cabarets in Berlin, than to the wild orgies of his own subjects. In fact he was civilized.

A passage across the Adriatic seemed problematic. The Transport Minister hoped we might catch a ship that had tried to leave Scutari three times, but had always been thrown on the beach

by storms. The great difficulty was crossing the lake of Scutari. One steamer had been mysteriously sunk and another damaged. He promised to arrange a motor for us directly he should be able to put his hand on a boat to take us across the lake.

Jan and Jo simultaneously began to wish they had not eaten sardines at Riéka. The attack was very violent, and next day Jo stayed in bed, refusing the page boy's efforts to tempt her with lunch.

"See," he said, bearing in a third dish, "English, your i *risshkew*."

Jo pretended to be pleased, and made Jan eat the Irish stew after his lunch, so that the page boy's feelings should not be hurt.

Suddenly word came from the Transport Minister that a carriage was coming for us. We were to go to Pod, and pick up the others. So Jo stopped tying herself into knots and had to get up and go. We arrived at Pod to find everybody ill. Two days' sedentary life and Turkish delight were responsible for this. We suggested castor oil. One had just missed pleurisy—Whatmough had acted as nurse.

The professor had been trying to pump Stajitch as to our future plans, as he was again alone and rudderless. Stajitch said—

"Mr. and Mrs. Gordon alone know, and they are in Cettinje."

"Now that's not kind to keep a fellow countryman in the dark," said the professor.

Stajitch assured him he knew nothing; but the professor walked away, murmuring that the English were undermining a good Serb boy's character.

And that was the last of the professor.

CHAPTER XXIII

INTO ALBANIA

We caught the mayor in the morning. He was in his shirt-sleeves and he said that the auto had been arranged for. It came and we packed in. On the back perched a boy who outsmelt any Serb we had ever found. It seemed impossible that a human could so smell and yet live. Suddenly the boy drew a packet from his pocket and the smell became intolerable. He unwrapped a piece of cheese and, gasping for breath, we watched it disappear. When it had gone we breathed more freely, but the odour still clung to the youth, and we were not sorry when the auto pulled up at the village of Plavnitza on the edge of the lake. A man, who said that he had been sent to help us, dragged us to the telephone office. He worried the instrument for a while and announced that the boat would be here in two hours. It would have come earlier, but somehow they couldn't make steam get up. We expected it to come in four, and so went off to get something to eat.

The lake was very high, coming right up to the road. All the low fields were covered with water as far as one could see. The girl at the inn was shuddering and shivering with malaria, and we give her some quinine. At last the steamer came.

We had to pack into one of those cockhat boats, as the quay was separated from the village by half a mile of water. When we got to the steamer, the captain leaned over the side and shouted—

"Where are the mattresses?"

"What mattresses?" said the harbour-master.

"When are you going to start?" demanded we, clambering on board.

"When I get the mattresses," said the captain.

"But what mattresses?" replied the harbour-master.

"I was sent to get mattresses," said the captain, "and here I wait till they come."

This was a nuisance, nobody had said anything about the mattresses.

"I shan't go till to-morrow anyhow," said the skipper.

"I think we'd all better go back to Podgoritza and come again to-morrow," said the man in charge.

"We don't move from here," said Jo, firmly. "If he won't go we'll sit on this boat—which was

sent for us—and sing songs all night so that he shan't sleep."

The captain refused to move without the mattresses and we refused to go back, so a violent argument ensued. We remained adamant. At last in despair the harbour master said that he would go and telephone. Night was coming on, the deck was chilly, so Jan went to explore. The quay was half under water, but by jumping from stone to stone one could get about, and Jan discovered an entrance into the stone storehouse. The door was boarded up, but he forced his way in, discovering a huge empty interior banked up well above the water. At one end was a platform made of boards on tubs. An ideal bed. He called the company and they arranged themselves on the planks, though some were dismayed at the prospect of getting no supper. The boards were loose and as each took his place they bobbed up and down. Miss Brindley said that it seemed like sleeping on the keyboard of a piano. We did not expect to see anything before morning of the harbour-master or of Stajitch who had gone with him; but just as we were settled and beginning to snore and the rats were running about, Stajitch poked his head through the window and said that the boat was going immediately. We reluctantly got up, for we were really rather cosy, packed again

and hopped in the moonlight from stone to stone till we got to the ship—which was the same old Turkish gunboat on which we had travelled once before. The thing was then explained—a telegraphic mistake. The captain had been ordered to fetch the strangers: but strangers and mattresses are only one letter different, "n" or "m," this letter had been transposed.

Luckily it was a beautiful moonlight night. The lake was wonderfully romantic. A fat Serbian captain, who seemed to know Stajitch, made a request. He said that he had been cut off from his division, which was at Monastir, and that he was going to try and rejoin them. He ask us if he could join our party, as it would come cheaper at the hotels and he could get transport.

It was pretty cold on the lake, but we wrapped ourselves in our blankets and said the view was lovely. Hunger was also gnawing within us, so we were glad when at last the rumbling old engines halted and the steamer gave three hoots. We waited anxiously, and at last a large rowboat came sideways against the steamer. Four carriages were waiting in the bazaar. A very polite Montenegrin doctor welcomed us at the hotel and we got some much desired food.

Bed was beginning to be a mere commonplace

now, but we enjoyed it for all that, and slept well into the morning.

Scutari wore its usual air of "the ballet" when we arose. The ladies dressed all in their best clothes, and with great flowing veils and wide skirted coats were hobbling to church. The shopkeepers, with their long black and white legs and coloured shirts, were lounging about the low counters of their shops, smoking and drinking coffee brought them (on little swinging trays) by boys.

The British consul had taken up his quarters at the "Maison Piget." The house was gated, as are all Albanian houses, but this gate was like an old feudal portal. The doors were wonderfully carved and were opened by our old friend the Wolf. We had thought him to be a servant of Suma's, but it appeared that he belonged to the British Empire.

The house was crammed full of arms: a little cannon threatened us on the stairway, swords, claymores, creeses, falchions, scimitars, glaives, dirks, and yatagans were nailed on all the walls, and there were muskets of every sort and size, heavy arquebuses from the north and gas-pipe guns and Arab horsemen firelocks with polished stocks like the handle of a corkscrew, all inlaid with gold, silver, and mother-of-pearl.

"Yes," said the consul, gazing reflectively, "he had a taste for weapons. And also for old cookery books."

The consul said that he thought that there was a boat at San Giovanni. We cheered, for our luck seemed to be holding, and while he went off to the Italian consul we went to the governor to beg for transport. Neither consul nor governor was in, but we caught the Italian consul in the afternoon. He admitted that there was a boat, but warned us that it was no nosegay. He said that two Frenchmen who had thought of taking it had sent him back a telegram which had quite unnerved him.

"Et je n'ai jamais dit qu'elle était une Trans-atlantique," he said, waving his arms.

He said that the archbishop had told him that a party of English had come into the town last night, "en haillons," but that he had not believed it possible. However, he had seen two of us in the street that morning, and had realized that it was true.

We said that any boat would do. He warned us of the danger of submarines.

At the consul's house we found the captain of the Miridites awaiting us. He was a heavy-looking man with European clothes and a fez. After the ceremonious coffee he made a set speech, saying

that he was paying his duties to the great British Empire, and that England was their only hope. The consul sat rather wishing that he wouldn't, and that his servant had said that he was not at home. In common with most of the Christian rulers of Albania this gentleman seemed to have spent most of his time in exile.

Returning to the hotel Jan found that Jo had been purchasing, and he dragged her and Miss Brindley off to see the archbishop. The cathedral still carries the scars of the first bombardment. The archbishop, a large flat man, gave us each a hand as though he expected us to kiss it; he had a huge archiepispocal ring and a lot of imperiosity. He seemed more political than bishopy, though most of the Churchmen are; and there is the tale of one who said, "I would rather people went to drill than to church." There were a lot of wealthy looking Albanians sitting round and being respectable. The archbishop spoke no French nor German, only Italian. But Jan, with the help of a lot of old musical terms, and an imperfectly forgotten Spanish, managed to convey to him some intelligible compliments and sentences. We got out at last, and his eminence accompanied us to the top of the stairs and gave us the difficult problem of bowing backwards as we went down. This visit was necessary, as we might have had to

get a " Besa " from him if we meant to go through to Durazzo.

The Serbian captain who had been on the Turkish gunboat met us in the street. He dragged us into a café and began to order beer by the half-dozen. He presented Jo with a small Turkish gold coin, which was valued at five shillings, as a bribe to allow him to join our party. As he already had permission it seemed superfluous.

Some of our party were still pretty seedy. Two had gone to a shop in search of castor oil. A very old and withered chemist, who spoke bad French, invited them in and asked for an account of their adventures, interrupting them with explosions of " Ah poves, poves, poves, poves." " Ah, poves, poves, poves, poves," between every incident and also at the final request for the medicine. He showed them to the door and suddenly burst into unexpected English.

" Good naite, vairey good. I am your poppa."

In the hotel café we found two French aeroplanists, for four had arrived that day, sailing down over the city, to the great terror of the inhabitants. They seemed to be afflicted with the same idea as " Quel Pays."

" Ah, monsieur et dame," said they, " quel pays."

We asked them how things were.

"We have just come from Prizren. The Serbs are in a dreadful condition. All the roads are covered with starving and dying people. The troops are eating dead horses and roots. There have been violent snow blizzards all over the mountains. We saw some of your people, too, doctors and nurses, they were going off to Ipek, 'dans une condition déplorable.' We came across the mountains; one of us is lost. Awful country, nowhere to land if anything went wrong and one of our machines has not arrived. God knows what has happened to them. The rest of us are all coming along on foot. We burnt fifty motor cars yesterday, monsieur, that made a blaze."

We asked them what sort of a time they had had in Serbia; but much of their answer is unpublishable.

"Each time we ascended every Serbian regiment fired at us. Once we came down over a battalion and the whole lot fired volleys, and when we landed and stood in front of our machine holding up our hands," they pantomimed, "they continued to fire at us. Then they came and took us prisoners, and were going to shoot us, although one of us had a military medal. A schoolmaster recognised us as French and rescued us. Our machine was broken; but we could get no transport and had to walk thirty kilometres back to our base without food.

"Another time we were chasing an Austrian, the Serbian batteries fired at us, monsieur, not at the enemy. Our officers had to send from the aerodrome to tell them to stop."

As we were going to bed the Montenegrin doctor came in.

"I am sent by the governor, monsieur," said he. "We do not consider it safe, this boat idea. Austrian submarines are everywhere, and the governor would feel it as a personal responsibility if you were drowned. We will provide carriages to Alessio and thence arrange horses—only one day and a half on to Durazzo. Thence Essad Pasha will give you his motor boat and you can easily get to Valona."

Our men groaned at the thought of more journeying. They were all thoroughly fed up with the road, though personally we rather liked the idea. We had heard that Durazzo was very interesting, and would have liked to have met Essad, though we did not know just how his politics were trending. We decided to see the Italian consul once more.

Next day we hunted up the mayor, Mahram Beg, a Turk, for he also could give us a "Besa" if necessary. He was at last discovered, a little crumpled looking man in an office. We were not allowed to interview him in private, but a

Montenegrin was there and all conversation had to pass by him like through an imperfect telephone. We gave the mayor a greeting from Colonel P—— and little else. A very disappointing interview.

Jan went off to see the governor, who received him kindly. He said that he would arrange everything, but that it was difficult for him with the Italian consul, as the Powers did not recognize the Montenegrin occupation.

"You see, monsieur, here I am the law, and yet the law does not recognize me."

The Italian assured us that the Montenegrins were wrong, and that of course the boat would be escorted, and the danger reduced to its least possible amount. Just after we had left him we heard two things which made us jump.

A body of English officers had landed at Medua, and ninety English refugees from Serbia were *en route* for Scutari. Could we not catch the transport and at the same time leave room for the others? Suma came in, and we consulted him. He was doubtful if the horses could be got at Alessio for us.

"You see, it is Albania and not Montenegro," he repeated.

We accordingly hunted up the doctor. He promised us horses for the morrow. The carriages had all gone to fetch the English officers. We asked

him about Alessio, and he assured us that the telephone message had been received saying that they were waiting. We asked him several times until he grew angry and said—

"Do you doubt my honour, then?"

Before we went to bed the hotel proprietor came to us.

"Do you pay or the Government?" asked he; and seemed very relieved when we told him that we paid. The Montenegrins are neither loved nor trusted here.

The next morning the horses came, but very late. In the crowd watching our departure was an old Albanian without a moustache. That was a strange sight; we looked harder. It was a woman. She must have been one of those who had sworn eternal virginity, and so achieve all a man's privileges, even eating with them instead of getting the scraps left over from the meal. But the punishment of death awaited her if she failed her vow. Here was one, chuckling and grinning at some of us in our attempts to mount the weird saddles and weirder steeds which had been provided. The Serb captain had a carriage, and another carriage took all our baggage, which had now sadly dwindled owing to the continued depredations of the police. We straggled out of the town and through the crowded bazaar, for it was a Saturday.

Passed the Venetian fort and the river from which stuck the funnel of the steamer so mysteriously sunk one night. We had heard that the Turkish gun flat which had transported us had burst her boilers, so now the Montenegrins had no steamers left.

The road was level and better than many we had come over, though once or twice the carriages were hopelessly mired, and had to be pushed across. West's horse had ideas about side streets, and bolted down each as he came to it.

We met the Adriatic Commission. Mr. Lamb and Mr. George Paget, returning after so long an absence, were in the first carriage. We recognized Mr. Paget at once, for though either of them might have liked old arms, only one would have collected old cookery books. The rest of the commission came along later. They stopped us. We expected questions about the Serbs; but no. They said—

"Can one buy underclothing in Scutari?"

Their baggage transport had been sunk by an Austrian submarine and they had only what they were wearing. We wished each other luck and went on. There was no hope of arriving at Alessio that night, we had started too late. As evening was falling, we came to an Albanian inn and decided to put up.

There was a stable full of manure on the ground floor, through which one had to pass, and in the dark one was continually slipping into the midden or running one's head unexpectedly into horses' hindquarters. Up a rickety stair were two rooms. The floor rocked as we walked over it, and every moment we expected to go through and be precipitated into the manure below. The walls and floor were so loosely made that the wind blew through in all directions, and we called it the "castle in the air." We supped on chickens which we had brought from Scutari, and Whatmough and Elmer made a fire in the yard and got us cocoa. By this time we were all getting fed up with romantic surroundings, and wanted something more solid. The swarthy countenances about the bonfire, the queer costumes in the flickering fire, left us unmoved.

Sleep was impossible. The wind caught one in every corner, threatening lumbago. Stajitch fled and camped outside in one of the carriages, despite the rain.

We started as early as possible—dawn. Whatmough, Cutting, Jo and Jan lost the road, but were eventually rescued by a policeman. About eleven one of the carriages broke down, and we had to repair it with tree and wire. Here the houses were again like fortresses, and everybody

ALBANIAN MULE DRIVERS CAMPING.

stared at us as though we came from the moon.

We reached the bank opposite Alessio—a small Turkish-looking village divided between a mud-bank and a hillside. We were about to turn over the bridge when news was brought that a motor-boat belonging to Essad was in San Giovanni harbour. We sent a policeman galloping on to stop it, and followed as fast as our meagre horses would allow. We also heard that a submarine had been in the port the day before and had tried to torpedo the ships lying there—but had missed.

We cantered on, pressing along a stony road which was almost level with the salt marshes on either side. San Giovanni appeared after about an hour and a half. We rode down on to the beach. The motor-boat was getting up anchor. We yelled to the skipper, but he understood no Serb; so we translated through a Turk who was lounging about. The skipper said that he could not embark us there as it was Montenegrin territory, but that if we would go back to Alessio he would wait for us at the mouth of the river and take us down that very night. This seemed too good to be true and we hurried back, passing an Austrian torpedo which had run up on the brown sand—a present from yesterday's raid. We turned the others and

cantered ahead to get a boat; reached the bridge once more and crossed into Albania. Officials ran from all sides to stop us, but we ignored them, dismounted, and ran to the side of the river where boats were loading, overloading with passengers. The boatmen refused to take us if we had no passes from the governor.

We hunted the governor's office up the hillside, panting in our haste. We burst in upon him. He was a dirty man in an unclean shirt and unkempt trousers.

"We want to go by the motor-boat," we explained.

"Who are you?" he asked, picking his teeth.

"We are the English about whom the governor of Scutari has telegraphed."

"I don't know anything about you," he said. His manner was ungracious.

"But," we said, "they assured us that they had telegraphed from Scutari."

The telegraph clerk was brought, and denied that any message had come.

"Anyhow," said the governor, "the motor-boat is for Albanian soldiers only, and has gone twenty minutes ago. I can do nothing for you without authority from Durazzo."

We wandered dismally back through the

town and were immediately arrested by the bridge officials because we had not paid the toll rates. We paid double to get rid of them.

We found an inn. It was the usual sort of building only of stone, and so dirtier than the others. Some travelling show seemed to have left its scenery in lieu of its bill, for bits of painted canvas did duty as partitions.

There was a room with six beds, but one was reserved for an Albanian officer. We took the rest. We loitered about all the afternoon, and in the evening the Albanian officer came in. He was a beaky-faced, unpleasant-looking man, but he procured us some bread, which we sorely lacked. The hotel had little food, so we gave them our rice. By this time fleas had got into it, and seeming to like it had bred in quantities. Still as we had nothing else it had to be cooked, and we picked out the boiled fleas as well as we were able. The Serbian captain started drinking with the Albanian, and soon both were well over the edge of sobriety.

They came up long after we had turned in, fell over Cutting, who cursed them without stint, and tumbled on to the beds which we had left for them. The Albanian made some remarks about the ladies, which from the tone were insults; but we were unable to chastize him, or we should all have been put into prison.

They snored and coughed all night, and spat about in the dark. Those who were sleeping near cowered beneath the mackintosh sheets and prayed for luck. But in the morning we found that they had been spitting on the wall.

CHAPTER XXIV

"ONE MORE RIBBER TO CROSS"

THE Mayor of Alessio had said that there were lots of horses, if we had Essad's permission; but the Turkish captain said that there were none, only at San Giovanni were they to be found. It was pelting with rain, but Blease and we decided to walk over to explore for ourselves. Jan first wrote a very stiff letter to the Governor of Scutari about the non-arrival of the telegram, and off we went, having borrowed oilskins and sou'westers. The Serb captain insisted on coming with us.

In half an hour the storm had made the stony road into a series of deep ponds which nearly joined each other, so Jo tucked her now ragged skirt into a bright woven Serbian belt and walked along with the water streaming from coat to boots. It became rather a pleasure to splash through ten-inch deep puddles, knowing that one could not possibly get any wetter, and this joy was intensified by the knowledge that the Serbian captain was being soaked and didn't like it.

San Giovanni consists of a series of huts, each like Burns' birthplace, grouped on the shelving side of a stony cliff. The bay itself is semi-circular, with a long cape jutting out to the south, the extremity of which almost always is floating in the air, owing to the mirage. In the bay were two rusty steamers—one the *Benedetto*, which had been promised to us by the Italian governor—several old wooden sailers, and a lot of smallish fishing smacks very brightly painted and with raised poop and prow. A group of Albanians were toiling at sacks which cumbered the little wooden jetty.

We immediately hunted out Captain Fabiano, the Italian commander of the wireless telegraph, and found him in a little house at the northern horn of the bay. He received us gaily. He spoke an excellent French, so that the Serbian captain could not butt in and interfere, as was his habit. Fabiano said that it would take a long time to get a wire to Brindisi, where we had heard were several ships of the English fleet, very bored and craving for something to do; we had hoped to get into communication with them. Then Jan had a brain wave.

"Is not the wind good for Durazzo?" asked he.

"Splendid," said Fabiano, "and no submarines to-day."

"Could we not get a fishing boat?"

"I will send and see."

While we were waiting he told us that he was sheltering the crew of the ship which had been transporting the English mission's kit. The captain of the little transport had set fire to the benzine which his boat was carrying, which act so enraged the submarine captain that he fired three torpedoes into her, and afterwards mounted his conning tower and fired ten full clips from his revolver at the swimming men. Luckily revolver shooting requires much practice. The men had clung to an overturned boat and had all eventually reached shore, after which they had to march a day and a half without boots or food, often fording rivers which came to their waists. Fabiano said that he was going to send them home on the *Benedetto*.

The captain of the port sent back word that we could have a boat immediately—much to Fabiano's surprise. But most of the party were at Alessio. We hurried off to see the captain of the port. Explanations, certainly when the luggage came; and off went Jan with a guide to get pack ponies. Halfway back to Alessio was the stable, but the steeds were not ready, so Jan was ushered up into a top room where was a huge fire, over which an Albanian was stewing a cormorant with all its feathers on. There were other Albanians and a

very old Montenegrin soldier. He admired everything English, even Jan's tobacco which he had bought in Pod.

We got to Alessio and packed everything hurriedly, paid the bill, tipped an old soldier two dinars, and off. As we passed over the bridge the clerk came running behind us. We had not paid the bridge fees, he said.

"How much?" asked Jan.

He hesitated.

"Two dinars," said he. He had been talking to the soldier.

Meanwhile Jo and Blease had found refuge in the house of the military commandant. It was a hovel like all the houses, but they were given a huge log fire which was built on the mud floor. Their stockings were soon hanging on a line above the blaze, and their shins were scorching, while they drank wonderful liqueur which was hospitably poured out by the beautiful old host.

Turkish coffee was prepared for them by a soldier in a bursting French fireman's uniform.

The captain's fire was the rendezvous of the village. Amiable and picturesque people came in and talked about the unhealthiness of the place, the relative bravery of nations with a special reference to the courage of Montenegrins, and about the submarine raid and of how the Austrian captain

had repeatedly fired his revolver at the sailors of the boat he had sunk while they were swimming in the water. Their eyes were streaming, not with emotion, but because in Montenegro one has no chimneys.

At dusk the rest of us arrived. The port captain said "To-morrow," so we climbed up to the inn, examined the stores, a few tins of tunny, mackerel, and milk, and the thirteen made the best of the bar-room floor for the night, booted and ready in case a transport for the *Benedetto* should arrive.

In the morning the captain said we could have the boat that night, and in the evening he said we could have it in the morning. His excuse was that the Borra was blowing its hardest, and no sailor could be found to venture out; but Fabiano said that this was not true.

The real reason was the sleek Austrian torpedo lying on the beach, for the Dulcinos are famed on the Adriatic coast because of their timidity.

Time passed drearily. The only amusement we had was to go and annoy the captain of the port by asking when we could have a boat. The wind was too cold for constitutionals, and we piled on all our clothes and sat on our knapsacks in the bar-room—for there was no fire—and talked wistfully of sausages, Yorkshire Relish and underdone beefsteaks.

We had much time for meditation, and pondered over the downfall of Serbia. Why had the Serbian Government so resolutely refused to make any territorial concessions to Bulgaria, when it was obvious that the entry of Bulgaria into the conflict meant the ruin of Serbia? Why had they permitted the Austrians to build their big gun emplacements on the Danube without interruption? Why had they not withdrawn to the hills and then built proper defences with barbed wire entanglements and labyrinths? for properly entrenched they might have defied the Austro-German forces for months. Some day, perhaps, these questions may have to be answered.

One day a party came in. They had passed through Vrntze much later than we, and we heard that Dr. Berry and an assistant had been seen hurriedly nailing boards on to the slaughter-house roof. They, too, had come by the Novi Bazar route. They said that the other routes were deep in snow and that the sufferings of the army were terrible. That a great portion had been hemmed in at Prizren, and that the Bulgars had shelled the passes so that they could not escape. They themselves had escaped the advancing Austrians by the skin of their teeth owing to good horses.

The snow came down, driving along the valleys

UNLOADING THE "BENEDETTO," SAN GIOVANNI DI MEDUA.

and whitening all the hills; the cold grew more intense, and the desire for English beefsteaks became an obsession: one talked of little else—or of Christmas. Food was becoming scarce. The tinned mackerel was diminishing; some days we had no bread. We walked once as far as Fabiano's wireless. The men were living in a shed made of wattle, and the Borra whistled through the cracks. There was a stove round which we sat while the men gave us tea; but the warmth it induced in one's face only intensified the feeling of cold on the back. Outside in the snow was a long-distance telescope, and peering through one could see the conning tower of the Austrian submarine, a faint hump on the sea by the southernmost point. As we returned to the cold hotel we passed the Montenegrin batteries: cannon too small to be of any use and the gunners of which were all so ill that they could not handle them.

Two Frenchmen had been in San Giovanni for ten days, and their anxiety to go was up to fever point. They took it in turns to stand "pour observer," wrapped up to their noses, in a doorway, watching the *Benedetto* in case she should give them the slip. We called them Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

One night somebody rushed up to their room. Booted, they jumped out of bed, and ran about

overhead. We thirteen scrambled up and intercepted them between the stairs and the door. "Pour observer, steam-funnel," they shouted, and disappeared into the night, followed by their valet with two hold-alls. They soon came back, very cold, and announced that steam had been seen issuing from the *Benedetto's* funnel. They had rushed to it in an open boat, and had learnt that the *Benedetto* was ordered to be in readiness. She fumed quietly for three days, and then was commandeered by the Serbian Government.

One day we saw a French aeroplane, an old friend of ours. Immediately every one working in the port tore up hill, men jumped off the big boats into little ones and rowed like a cinematograph turned double speed.

The commandant roared reassuringly from his attic window, and an officer tried to beat the men back. Seeing us convulsed with laughter, they turned sheepishly; but the little boats wagged on, people jumping into the water as they neared shore.

"Come and sit round my fire," said the commandant. So we again imbibed coffee and discussed courage. It was explained to us that none of the men in the boats were Montenegrins, and we politely agreed.

Hearing that a Red Cross party was in the village people came and asked for medical aid. We

explained that we had no doctors, but they begged us to come and see the invalids.

Doctors and chemists were unobtainable, and soldiers were dying every day.

We had no hesitation in tackling the Montenegrin soldiers, for at least we could do no harm, considering that our whole pharmacopœia was a little boracic, some bismuth capsules, Epsom salts, quinine, iodine, and one of the party owned a bottle of some patent unknown stuff, against fever and many other ailments.

We were first taken to the barracks in the evening, scrambling up a stony hill. The building looked like the disreputable ruins of somebody's "Folly." Half the roof was off, and the walls were full of holes. We stumbled up some black steps and entered a huge dark barn with four log fires down the centre of the room.

Round these were huddled crowds of men. They pulled some rough planks out of a hole in the wall to let in the sunset light, and the icy Borra rushed in, playing with the smoke and setting the men to coughing. Here and there on the ground were long mounds, covered completely with rough hand-woven rugs. These were the invalids, who moaned as the rugs were pulled off their faces. A great many had malaria; others had, as far as we could see, very bad pleurisy; and one old Albanian

with rattling breath was huddled up in a far corner, too miserable to speak.

Whatmough sent for a dribble of camphorated oil he had stored in his knapsack, "to cheer them up," said he, and rubbed everybody who had pain and a cough.

"Give them hot drinks," said Jo, in a large way. "Milk or——"

"Milk! There is no milk in Medua," said the sergeant.

"No tinned milk—eggs to be bought?"

"Nothing, no meat; we have not even enough bread, and that is all we get."

Very depressed, we sent them the remains of our Bovril and some tins of milk from the tiny hotel store, and bought the last three eggs in the place.

"Can't you send for more?" we asked.

"The hens are five hours away," said the proprietor, and didn't see why he should send for eggs even if we paid heavily for them. He had malaria—and nothing mattered.

We saw our patients daily, and the ones who weren't going to die got a little better, so this made our reputation. People poured in from the hills around, and we were much embarrassed. Our white-lipped waiter confided to each member of the party that he had a lump on his knee.

Every one became very busy and put off looking at it. We discussed it.

What could a lump on the knee be which did not make a busy waiter limp? And what on earth could we do for him when he wouldn't rest, and we were reduced to boracic powder and bismuth capsules? We gave him a tube of quinine, though, for his next attack of malaria.

The longer we rested in San Giovanni the more hopeless seemed the chance of getting away from it. The Serbian Government was close on our heels, and once they caught us up, there would be little left for us. That evening we were sitting with the Frenchmen, it was Monday. They, too, were depressed, and at last Tweedledum said—

"We shall never reach Paris, we shall be here for ever and ever."

"Oh," said Jan, rashly, "I think we ought to be home in a week."

Dum put on the superior French air, which is aggravating even in a nice man.

"Vous croyez?" he said.

"I'll bet on it," said Jan.

"A dinner," answered Dum.

"Good," said Jan.

This lent a new interest to life.

The very next day the Frenchmen told us that the Serb Government had arrived at Scutari; the

Montenegrin Governor had telegraphed to commandeer and keep back the *Benedetto*. We had been forgotten, and the French boat was to leave at dawn under escort.

She had been strictly forbidden by her owners to take passengers, but the Frenchmen had arranged through their minister to go by that boat if she left the first.

Telegraphic communication with the English minister at Cettinje was practically impossible; the only thing was to appeal to the captain. First we rushed up the hill, and interviewed Captain Fabiano, who had already made various efforts to get us off. He promised to try and influence the French captain.

Then we flung ourselves into a boat and made for the little steamer. People were looking at something with opera glasses, and our boatmen took fright and wanted to row straight for land. Jan cursed them so much, however, that they began to fear us more than imaginary submarines or aeroplanes, and brought us alongside the vessel.

The captain was ashore, taking a walk; the crew very sympathetically made contradictory suggestions as to his whereabouts.

At last we caught him. He was nice, but had strict orders, he said, to take no one.

"But, monsieur," we said, "if we were

swimming in the sea, or cast off on a desert island, you would rescue us."

He admitted it.

"Well, what is the difference? Here we cannot get away; the food is growing less and less."

He objected that he had no boats, and no life-saving apparatus.

"That is nothing. We must get away from here. We will give you a paper saying that it is on our own responsibility. In this country one cannot telegraph, the telegrams never arrive. You know the Balkans."

He smiled.

"Oui, oui, c'est un pays où le Bon Dieu n'a pas passé, ou au moins il a peut-être passé en aeroplane."

At last he agreed to take us if we could get a letter from Fabiano, and so take the responsibility from his shoulders. This we got. Fabiano said "Au revoir, bon voyage" for the fifth time, and at dawn we got a call, and quitted the bar-room floor for ever. Fabiano wished us "bon voyage" for the sixth time in the chilly dawn, and we embarked.

The mate, a little round man, greeted us, and in the moments when they were not rushing about with ropes and chains the cook explained the Austrian submarine attack.

"You see, monsieur et dame," said he, "they

came in over there. The *Benedetto* was lying outside of that sandbank, and that is the torpedo which is lying on the beach. The one aimed at us came straight, one could see the whorls of the water coming straight at us, but it just tipped the sandbank and dived underneath our keel. It stuck in the mud then, and the water boiled over it for a long while."

The mate cut one of the anchors because they were afraid of fouling the sunken torpedo, and we steamed slowly out from the shelter of the sandbank.

No escort was visible, and soon the sailors began to look anxious. They scanned the horizon anxiously. At last one cried, "There she is." Far away against the western dawn could be seen a thin needle mark of smoke. In half an hour we were quite close, an Italian destroyer was convoying a small steamer. The destroyer swung round under our stern, while the steamer, its funnels set back, raced for San Giovanni looking like a frightened puppy tearing towards home. The grey warship surged past us, and out towards the horizon once more, our captain shouting to them that he could get to Brindisi by midnight. Far away on the sky-line could be seen the three funnels of a cruiser.

We breakfasted on tinned mackerel, an unlucky

dish. The *Harmonie*, empty of cargo, was like an eggshell in the water. She bounced and rolled and bounded from wave to wave, half of the time her screw out of the water. The breakfast did not nourish many. Far on the horizon could be seen the destroyer and the cruiser sweeping in gigantic circles.

Half a kilometre away a periscope suddenly appeared, then the submarine dived, rose once more, showing the rounded conning tower, dived, rose again, like a porpoise at play.

"See," cried the sailors, "how well are we guarded. Outermost the cruiser, then the destroyer, and innermost the submarine." The cruiser and destroyer took big sweeps once more and steamed off behind us towards Cattaro.

Our boat rolled its way from dawn to dusk. We sought refuge in the coal hole, some lay down in the little officers' cabin. After dark the sea grew more rough, and splashing over the deck drove even the most ill to find shelter. Whatmough staggered to the companion, tripped over something, and fell the length of the stair accompanied by a hard object which hit him and made hissing sounds like a bicycle pump. He was too seasick to investigate, but next morning found the ship's tortoise lying on its back and feebly waving its feet and head.

Then the engines slowly ceased, and there was

silence. What had happened? The steamer gave four timid hoots. The people in the cabin lay in the darkness wondering if they had broken down, for it was not nearly midnight. At last the mate came in.

"Why, you're all in the dark," he said.

Some one asked, "When shall we get to Brindisi?"

"We're there," said the mate.

The steamer rocked on the sea, waiting for an escort through the mine field, lights were sparkling in the distance, and now and then flashlights cut the dark blue of the sky. Great black ships surged by in the gloom, ships with insistent queries as to who we were and whence we came.

At last an escort came: we were berthed and lay about waiting for the dawn.

Long after day came the doctor, who passed us, and we stepped ashore saying—

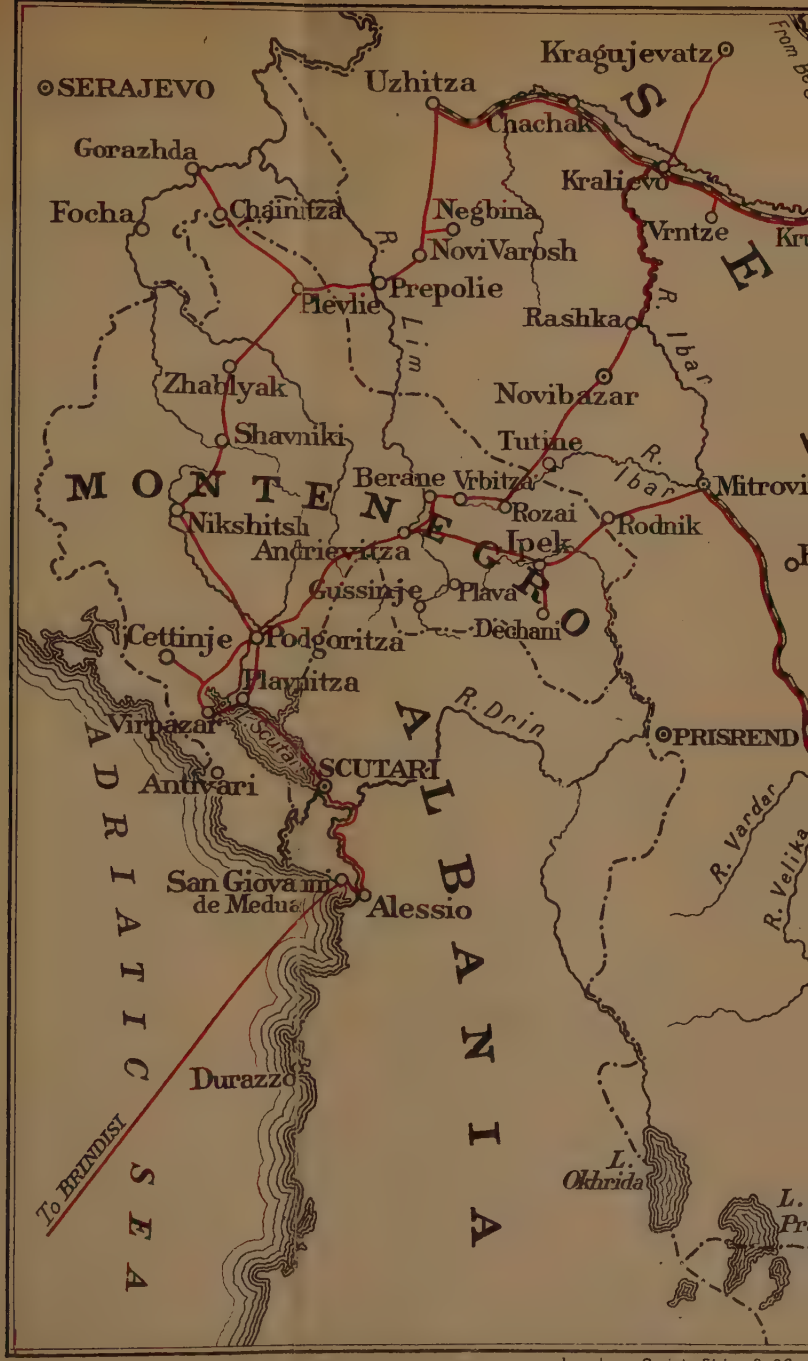
"Thank God we are back in Europe once again."

Two days later San Giovanni was bombarded by an Austrian cruiser, and all the shipping was sunk, *Benedetto* and all.

We were heartily welcomed in Brindisi by the English colony, and at the consul's office learned that the submarine was an Austrian, and that the cruiser had made the sweep to chase it away. Jo, Miss Brindley, and Jan went to Rome, where they

were feasted by more English, while at Milan—where the rest of the party spent the night—a whole theatre stood and cheered them when they came in.

Jan won his bet by four minutes.



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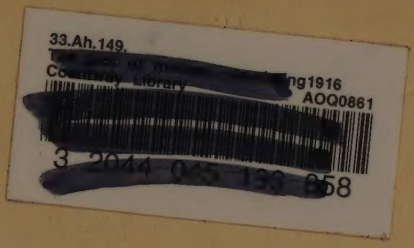

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